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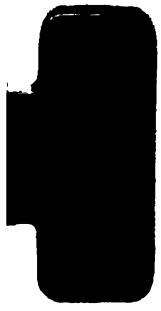

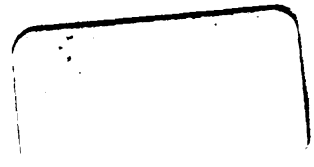

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LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

VOL. II.

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CHAP. VI.

LORENZO endeavours to secure the peace of Italy—Rise of the modern idea of the balance of power—Conspiracy of Frescobaldi—Expulsion of the Turks from Otranto—The Venetians and the pope attack the duke of Ferrara—Lorenzo undertakes his defence—The Florentines and Neapolitans ravage the papal territories—The duke of Calabria defeated by Roberto Malatesta—Progress of the Venetian arms—Sixtus deserts and excommunicates his allies—Congress of Cremona—Death of Sixtus IV.—Succeeded by Giambattista Cibò, who assumes the name of Innocent VIII.—Lorenzo gains the confidence of the new pope—The Florentines attempt to recover the town of Sarzana—Capture of Pietra-Santa—Lorenzo retires to the baths of S. Filippo—The pope forms the design of possessing himself of the kingdom of Naples—Lorenzo supports the king—Prevails upon the Florentines to take a decided part—Effects a reconciliation between the king and the pope—Suppresses the insurrection at Osimo—Capture of Sarzana—Lorenzo protects the smaller states of Italy—The king of Naples infringes his treaty with the pope—Peace again restored—Review of the government of Florence—Regulations introduced by Lorenzo—Prosperity of the Florentine state—High reputation of Lorenzo—General tranquillity of Italy.

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Soon after the termination of hostilities between Sixtus IV. and the republick of Florence, Lorenzo began to unfold those comprehensive plans for securing the peace of Italy on a permanent foundation, which confer the highest honour on his political life. Of the extensive authority which he had obtained by his late conduct, every day afforded additional proof; and it appears to have been his intention to employ it for the wisest and most salutary purposes. By whatever motives he was led to this great attempt, he pursued it with deep policy and unceasing assiduity,

Lorenzo endeavours to secure the peace of Italy.

1481.

CHAP. VI. assiduity, and finally experienced a degree of success equal to his warmest expectations.

Rise of the modern idea of the balance of power.

The situation of Italy at this period afforded an ample field for the exercise of political talents. The number of independent states of which it was composed, the inequality of their strength, the ambitious views of some, and the ever active fears of others, kept the whole country in continual agitation and alarm. The vicinity of these states to each other, and the narrow bounds of their respective dominions, required a promptitude of decision in cases of disagreement, unexampled in any subsequent period of modern history. Where the event of open war seemed doubtful, private treachery was without scruple resorted to; and where that failed of success, an appeal was again made to arms. The pontifical see had itself set the example of a mode of conduct that burst asunder all the bonds of society, and served as a convincing proof that nothing was thought unlawful which appeared to be expedient. To counterpoise all the jarring interests of these different governments, to restrain the powerful, to succour the weak, and to unite the whole in one firm body, so as to enable them, on the one hand, successfully to oppose the formidable power of the Turks, and, on the other, to repel

repel the incursions of the French and the Germans, both of whom were objects of terrour to the less warlike inhabitants of Italy, were the important ends which Lorenzo proposed to accomplish. The effectual defence of the Florentine dominions against the encroachments of their more powerful neighbours, though perhaps his chief inducement for engaging in so extensive a project, appeared in the execution of it, rather as a necessary part of his system, than as the principal object which he had in view. In these transactions we may trace the first decisive instance of that political arrangement, which was more fully developed and more widely extended in the succeeding century, and which has since been denominated the balance of power. Casual alliances, arising from consanguinity, from personal attachment, from vicinity, or from interest, had indeed frequently subsisted among the Italian states; but these were only partial and temporary engagements, and rather tended to divide the country into two or more powerful parties, than to counterpoise the interests of individual governments, so as to produce in the result the general tranquillity[a].

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But

[a] It is commonly understood that the idea of a systematick arrangement, for securing to states, within the same

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Conspiracy of Frescobaldi.

But before Lorenzo engaged in these momentous undertakings, he had further personal dangers

same sphere of political action, the possession of their respective territories, and the continuance of existing rights, is of modern origin, having arisen among the Italian states in the fifteenth century. *Robertson's Hist. of Cha.* V. *v.* i. *sec.* 2. But Mr. Hume has attempted to shew that this system, if not theoretically understood, was at least practically adopted by the ancient states of Greece and the neighbouring governments. *Essays, v.* i. *part* ii. *Essay* 7. In adjusting the extent to which these opinions may be adopted, there is no great difficulty. Wherever mankind have formed themselves into societies, (and history affords no instance of their being found in any other state,) the conduct of a tribe, or a nation, has been marked by a general will; and states, like individuals, have had their antipathies and predilections, their jealousies, and their fears. The powerful have endeavoured to oppress the weak, and the weak have sought refuge from the powerful in their mutual union. Notwithstanding the great degree of civilization that obtained among the Grecian states, their political conduct seems to have been directed upon no higher principle; conquests were pursued as opportunity offered, and precautions for safety were delayed till the hour of danger arrived. The preponderating mass of the Roman republick attracted into its vortex whatever was opposed to its influence; and the violent commotions of the middle ages, by which that immense body was again broken into new forms, and impelled in vague and eccentrick directions, postponed to a late period the possibility of regulated action. The transactions in Italy, during the fourteenth

dangers to encounter. The moderation of his conduct could neither extinguish nor allay the insatiable spirit of revenge that burnt in the breast of Girolamo Riario. Defeated in his ambitious projects by the superiour talents of Lorenzo, he once more had recourse to his treacherous practices; and, by an intercourse with some of the Florentine exiles, again found, even in Florence, the instruments of his purpose. By their instigation, Battista Frescobaldi, with only two assistants, undertook to assassinate Lorenzo in the church of the Carmeli, on the day of Ascension, being the last day of May 1481. This attempt was not conducted with the same secrecy as that which we have before related,

teenth and fifteenth centuries, bear indeed a strong resemblance to those which took place among the Grecian states; but it was not till nearly the close of the latter century, that a system of general security and pacification was clearly developed, and precautions taken for ensuring its continuance. Simple as this idea may now appear, yet it must be considered that, before the adoption of it, the minds of men, and consequently the maxims of states, must have undergone an important change: views of aggrandizement were to be repressed; war was to be prosecuted, not for the purpose of conquest, but of security; and, above all, an eye was to be found that could discern, and a mind that could comprehend, so extended an object.

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related. The friends of Lorenzo were watchful for his safety. Frescobaldi was seized; and having upon his examination disclosed his accomplices, was executed with them on the 6th day of the following month[b]. The treachery of Frescobaldi occasioned at Florence general surprise, and was almost regarded as an instance of insanity. He had been the consul of the Florentine republick at Pera, and it was at his instance that Bandini, the murderer of Giuliano, had been delivered up by Mahomet II. Yet neither the atrociousness of the crime, nor the dread of the example, deterred him from a similar enterprise. From this circumstance Lorenzo perceived the necessity of being more diligently on his guard against the attempts of his profligate antagonists; and whilst he lamented the depravity of the times, that rendered such a precaution necessary, he was generally surrounded, when he appeared in publick, by a number of tried friends and adherents. In this respect he has not, however, escaped censure, although from a quarter where it should have been silenced by the sense of decency, if not by the feelings of gratitude. The kindness shewn by

[b] The other conspirators were Filippo Balducci, and Amoretto, the illegitimate son of Guido Baldovinetti. *v. Ammir. lib.* 25.

by him to Raffaello Maffei, the brother of Antonio, who, in the conspiracy of the Pazzi, had undertaken to be the immediate instrument of his destruction, has before been noticed[c]. In return for such unmerited attention, this historian has availed himself of a measure which was rendered necessary by repeated instances of treachery, to represent Lorenzo as a gloomy tyrant, who supported his authority, and secured his safety in Florence, by the aid of a band of ruffians, and who found in musick alone a solace from his anxiety[d]. The reputation of Lorenzo is not, however, likely to suffer more from the pen of one brother, than his person did from the dagger of the other. CHAP. VI.

On the conclusion of the contest with the papal see, the first object not only of Lorenzo, but of all the Italian potentates, was the expulsion Expulsion of the Turks from Otranto.

[c] *Vol.* i. *p.* 277.

[d] "Post hæc Laurentius defunctus periculo, resipiscere paulatim, majoreque postmodum apud suos cives esse auctoritate, ac Tyranno propius agitare; cum sicariis incedere, excubiis ac nunciis diligentius invigilare, denique amissas in bello facultates undecunque recuperare cœpit. Vir aspectu tristi, ore truculento, sermone ingratus, animo factiosus, in curis agitans continuo, præter unum musicæ solatium."

Raph. Volt. Com. Urb. p. 153.

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sion of the Turks from Otranto. For this purpose a league was concluded, to which the Venetians only refused to accede. Suspicions had already been entertained that Mahomet II. had been incited to his enterprise by the representations of that state; and these suspicions were strengthened by the indifference which the Venetians manifested on so alarming an occasion. It is, however, probable, that they kept aloof from the contest, merely for the purpose of availing themselves of any opportunity of aggrandizement, which the exhausted situation of the neighbouring states might afford. With the powers of Italy, the kings of Arragon, of Portugal, and of Hungary, united their arms. The city of Otranto was attacked by a formidable army under the command of the duke of Calabria; whilst the united fleets of the king of Naples, the pope, and the Genoese, were stationed to prevent the arrival of further aid to the besieged. The place was, however, defended with great courage, and the event yet remained doubtful, when intelligence was received of the death of the Emperour Mahomet II. who had established the seat of the Turkish empire at Constantinople, and been the scourge of Christendom for nearly half a century. Upon his death, a disagreement arose between his two sons Bajazet and Zizim; in consequence of which,

which, the Turkish troops destined to the relief of Otranto were recalled, and the place was left to its fate. A capitulation was concluded on the tenth day of September 1481, by which the Turks stipulated for a free return to their native country; but the duke of Calabria, on the surrender of the city, found a pretext for eluding the treaty, and retained as prisoners about fifteen hundred Turks, whom he afterwards employed in the different wars in which he was engaged[c].

The Venetians and the pope attack the duke of Ferrara.

Whilst the other states of Italy were thus engaged in the common cause, the Venetians had been devising means for possessing themselves of the dominions of Ercole d'Este, duke of Ferrara, and, by the assistance of Girolamo Riario, had prevailed upon the pope to countenance their pretensions. The duke had married the daughter of Ferdinand, king of Naples; an alliance which, as it contributed to his credit and independence, had given great dissatisfaction to the Venetians. The first aggression was the erection of a fortress by those haughty republicans, on a part of the territory of Ferrara, which

[c] *Murat. Ann. v.* ix. *p.* 537.

CHAP. VI. which they pretended was within the limits of their own dominions. An embassy was immediately despatched by the duke to Venice, to avert, if possible, the hostile intentions of the senate, and to conciliate their good-will by the fairest representations, and the fullest professions of amity. Finding his efforts ineffectual, the duke resorted for succour to the pope; but Sixtus was already apprized of the part he had to act, and whilst he heard his solicitations with apparent indifference, was secretly preparing to join in his ruin. The motives by which Sixtus was actuated are not difficult to be discovered. If the family of Este could be deprived of their dominions, many circumstances concurred to justify the pretensions of the papal see to the sovereignty of Ferrara. That city was itself ranked among those over which the pontiffs asserted a signorial claim, which lay dormant, or was revived, as circumstances required; and although Sixtus could not singly contend with the Venetians in the division of the spoil, yet he well knew that the rest of Italy would interpose, to prevent their possessing themselves of a territory which would add so considerably to their power. In the contest therefore which he supposed must necessarily take place, Sixtus was not without hopes of vesting the government of

of Ferrara in his own family, in the person of Girolamo Riario, who was indefatigable in preparing for the approaching war. CHAP. VI.

In this exigency, the duke of Ferrara had two powerful resources. One of these was in the support which he derived from his father-in-law the king of Naples; and the other in the claims which he had upon the known justice of Lorenzo de' Medici. Neither of these disappointed his hopes. By the interference of Lorenzo, the duke of Milan joined in the league; and the marquis of Mantua, and Giovanni Bentivoglio, also became auxiliaries in the cause. The command of the allied army was intrusted to Federigo, duke of Urbino; but the preparation and direction of the war chiefly rested on Lorenzo de' Medici, on whose activity and prudence the allied powers had the most perfect reliance[f]. Lorenzo undertakes his defence.

The first object of the allies was to discover the intentions of the pope. No sooner had the Venetians The Florentines and Neapolitans ravage the papal territories.

[f] Fabroni has preserved a letter from the duke of Urbino to Lorenzo de' Medici, which sufficiently shows the confidence that was reposed in him by the allies, and the active part which he took in preparing for the contest. *v. Appx. No.* XLIII.

CHAP. VI. Venetians commenced their attack on the territory of Ferrara, than a formal request was made to Sixtus, to permit the duke of Calabria, with a body of Neapolitan troops, to pass through his dominions. His refusal sufficiently discovered the motives by which he was actuated. The duke immediately entered in a hostile manner the territories of the church, and having possessed himself of Terracina, Trevi, and other places, proceeded without interruption till he arrived within forty miles of Rome. At the same time the Florentine troops attacked and captured Castello, which was restored to Nicolo Vitelli, its former lord. By these unexpected and vigorous measures, Sixtus, instead of joining the Venetians, was compelled to solicit their assistance for his own protection. The duke had approached so near to Rome, that his advanced parties daily committed hostilities at the very gates of the city. In this emergency the pope had the good fortune to prevail upon Roberto Malatesta, lord of Rimini, to take upon him the command of his army. This celebrated leader, who was then in the pay of the Venetians, on obtaining their permission to assist their ally, proceeded to Rome. Having there made the necessary arrangements, Roberto led out the papal troops, which were sufficiently numerous, and were only in need of an able general

1482.

general effectually to oppose their enemies. The duke of Calabria, being in daily expectation of a reenforcement under the command of his brother Federigo, would gladly have avoided an engagement, but his adversary pressed him so vigorously, that he was compelled either to risk the event of a battle, or to incur the still greater danger of a disorderly retreat. This engagement, we are assured by Machiavelli, was the most obstinate and bloody that had occurred in Italy during the space of fifty years[g]. After a struggle of six hours, the contest terminated in the total defeat of the duke, who owed his liberty, or his life, to the fidelity and courage of his Turkish followers. Having thus delivered the pope from the imminent danger that threatened him, Roberto returned to Rome to enjoy the honours of his victory; but his triumph was of short duration, for a few days after his arrival he suddenly died, not without giving rise to a suspicion, that poison had been administered to him by the intervention of Girolamo Riario[h]. This

The duke of Calabria defeated by Roberto Malatesta.

[g] "E fu questa giornata combattuta con più virtu, "che alcun' altra che fusse stata fatta in cinquanta anni "in Italia; perchè vi morì, tra l' una parte e l' altra, "più che mille huomini." *Mac. Hist. lib.* 8.

[h] Gli scrittori dicono che fu sospetto che egli fosse morto di veleno, & io nelle notizie private de Malatesti ritrovo,

CHAP. VI. This suspicion received confirmation in the publick opinion, by the subsequent conduct of Sixtus and his kinsman. No sooner was Roberto dead, than the pope erected an equestrian statue to his memory; and Riario proceeded with the army which Roberto had lately led to victory, to dispossess his illegitimate son Pandolfo, to whom he had bequeathed his possessions, of the city of Rimini[1]. In this attempt the ecclesiastical plunderers would probably have been successful, had not the vigorous interference of Lorenzo de' Medici, to whom Pandolfo resorted for succour, and who sent a body of Florentine troops to his speedy relief, frustrated their profligate purpose. Riario then turned his arms towards Castello, which was courageously defended by Vitelli, till the Florentines once more gave him effectual aid. A similar attack, and with similar success, was about the same time made by Sixtus on the city of Pesaro, the dominion of Constantino Sforza; who having first engaged in the league against the Venetians, afterwards

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ritrovo, che l' autore di tanta sceleratezza fu creduto essere stato il conte Girolamo, nipote del papa, o per invidia, o pure con speranza di poter metter le mani a quello stato, non lasciando Ruberto figliuoli leggitimi.

Ammir. lib. 25.

[1] *Mac. Hist. lib.* 8.

afterwards deserted his allies, and entered into their service, and was supposed to have died of grief because they had defrauded him of his stipulated pay[k]. CHAP. VI.

Whilst Sixtus was thus employed in defending his own dominions, or in attempting to seize upon those of his neighbours, the duke of Urbino had opposed himself to the Venetian army, but not with sufficient effect to prevent its making an alarming progress, and capturing several towns in the territory of Ferrara. The death of that general[l], and the sickness of the duke Progress of the Venetian arms.

[k] "Constantinus Sfortia Pisauri princeps fidus antea "Florentinis, durante adhuc stipendio, defecit ad Ve- "netos. Neque multos post dies, tertiana febri correp- "tus, mœrore, ut creditur, violatæ fidei, & a Venetis "pacti non soluti stipendii, V Kal. Sextiles interiit."
Fontius in Annal. ap. Fabr. ii. 235.

[l] The duke of Urbino and Roberto Malatesta died on the same day; one at Bologna, the other at Rome; each of them, although at the head of adverse armies, having recommended to the other the protection of his possessions and surviving family: "A dì 12 di Settembre "1482, ci fu nuove el Magnifico Roberto de Rimini era "morto a Roma di flusso. Stimasi sia stato avvelenato. "El duca d'Urbino era morto in Bologna, che era "andato al soccorso di Ferrara. Morirono in un dì, e "ciascuno

CHAP. VI. duke of Ferrara, which rendered him incapable of attending with vigour to the defence of his dominions, opened to the Venetians the fullest prospect of success. This sudden progress of the republican arms was not, however, agreeable to the pope; who, having given no aid in the contest, began to be apprehensive that he could claim no share in the spoil, whilst so considerable an accession of power to the Venetians might scarcely be consistent with his own safety. At the same time he perceived a storm gathering against him from another quarter. The emperour had threatened to call together a general council of the church; a measure either originating with, or promoted by, Lorenzo de' Medici; and for the effecting of which he had despatched Baccio Ugolino to Basil[m]. Induced by these various

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" ciascuno di loro mandava a raccomandare all' altro il " suo stato, e l'uno non seppe la morte dell' altro."
Ex Diario Allegretti ap. Fabr. v. ii. *p.* 245.

[m] Ugolino transmitted to Lorenzo, from time to time, a full account of his proceedings in several letters which are published by Fabroni, *in vitâ Laur. v.* ii. *p.* 227. from which it appears, that he was not without hopes of accomplishing his important object. " Non " domandate," says he, " come questi dottori della Uni- " versità leggano con fervore le scripture che io ho pub- " licate

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various considerations, Sixtus was at length prevailed upon to detach himself from the Venetians, and to listen to propositions for a separate peace. Under the sanction of the imperial ambassadour, a league was concluded at Rome for five years, between the pope, the king of Naples, the duke of Milan, and the Florentines, for the defence of the duke of Ferrara. Sixtus, having engaged in the common cause, was not inactive. Having first warned the Venetians to desist from the further progress of the war, and finding his remonstrances disregarded, he solemnly excommunicated his late allies[n]. The Venetians, however, persisted in their purpose, regardless of his denunciations, and having captured the town of Ficarola, laid siege to the city of Ferrara itself.

Sixtus deserts and excommunicates his allies.

At this important juncture a congress was held at Cremona, for the purpose of considering on the most effectual means of repressing the growing power of the Venetians, and of securing the rest of Italy from the effects of their ambition.

Congress of Cremona.

" licate quì in Consilio. Che più ? Il papa è più inviso " quì che costì, et se l' Imperatore non ce la macchia, " non sum sine spe di far qualcosa."

[n] *Fabr. in vitâ Laur. adnot. & monum.* ii. 234.

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tion. The persons who assembled on this occasion were Alfonso duke of Calabria, Lodovico Sforza, Lorenzo de' Medici, Lodovico Gonzaga marquis of Mantua, the duke of Ferrara; and on the part of the pope, Girolamo Riario, and the cardinal of Mantua, with others of inferiour note. The king of France, aware of the character of Riario, advised Lorenzo by letter not to trust himself to this interview°; but the important consequences expected from it induced him to disregard the precaution. Among other arrangements it was determined that the Milanese should endeavour to form a diversion by an attack on the Venetian territory, and that the duke of Calabria should repair with a powerful body of troops to the relief of the duke of Ferrara. By these decisive measures, a speedy and effectual stop was put to the further progress of the Venetian arms, whilst the allied troops overran

° Thus he addresses Lorenzo in a letter dated xiii Kal. Febr. 1482, *ap. Fabr. adnot. et mon. v.* ii. *p.* 243. "Alla Giornata di Ferrara dove dite avere promesso "andare, vi avrei consigliato non andasse punto, ma che "guardaste bene tener sicura vostra persona; perchè "non conosco nè i personaggi nè il luogo, dove v' hab- "biate a trovare, e v' avrei mandato uno imbasciatore "di quà in vostra excusatione; nientidimanco, poichè "l'avete promesso, me ne reporto a voi; et alla buona "hora sià, et a Dio. Luis."

ran the territories of Bergamo, of Brescia, and of Verona. Finding their attempt to subjugate the city of Ferrara frustrated, and solicitous for the safety of their own dominions, the Venetians had recourse to negotiation, and had sufficient influence with Lodovico Sforza to prevail upon him to desert the common cause. His derelic. tion induced the allies to accede to propositions for peace, which, though sufficiently favourable to the Venetians, secured the duke of Ferrara from the ambition of his powerful neighbours, and repressed that spirit of encroachment which the Venetians had manifested, as well on this as on former occasions.

CHAP. VI. 1483.

As soon as the affairs of Italy were so adjusted as to give the first indications of permanent tranquillity, Sixtus died. The coincidence of these events gave rise to an opinion which was rendered in some degree credible by the knowledge of his restless disposition, that his death was occasioned by vexation at the prospect of a general peace[p]. Of the character of this

Death of Sixtus IV.

[p] He died on the 12th of August 1484, being the fifth day after peace was proclaimed at Rome. *Murat. Ann. v.* ix. *p.* 546. 549. "O perchè fusse il termine di "sua vita venuto, o perchè il dolore della pace fatta, "come nemica a quella, l'amazzasse." *Mac. Hist. lib.* 8.

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this successour of St. Peter, we have already had sufficient proof. It must indeed be acknowledged that no age has exhibited such flagrant instances of the depravity of the Roman see, as the close of the fifteenth century, when the profligacy of Sixtus IV. led the way, at a short interval, to the still more outrageous and unnatural crimes of Alexander VI. The avarice of Sixtus was equal to his ambition. He was the first Roman pontiff who openly exposed to sale the principal offices of the church; but not satisfied with the disposal of such as became vacant, he instituted new ones, for the avowed purpose of selling them, and thereby contrived to obtain a certain emolument from the uncertain tenure by which he held his see. To Sixtus IV. posterity are also indebted for the institution of inquisitors of the press, without whose license no work was suffered to be printed. In this indeed he gave an instance of his prudence; it being extremely consistent, that those who are conscious of their own misconduct should endeavour to stifle the voice that publishes and perpetuates it. Even the orthodox Muratori acknowledges, that this pontiff had a heavy account to make up at the tribunal of God[q].

The

[q] "Di grossi conti avrà avuto questo pontefice nel "tribunale di Dio." *Annal. v.* ix. *p.* 538.

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The death of Sixtus IV. who for the space of thirteen years had embroiled the states of Italy in constant dissensions, was a favourable omen of the continuance of tranquillity; and the choice made by the conclave of his successour seemed still further to secure so desirable an object. Giambattista Cibò, who obtained on this occasion the suffrages of the sacred college, was a Genoese by birth, though of Greek extraction. The urbanity and mildness of his manners formed a striking contrast to the inflexible character of his predecessor. From his envoys at Rome, Lorenzo became early acquainted with the disposition of the new pope, who assumed the name of Innocent VIII. At the time of his elevation to the supremacy, he was about fifty-five years of age, and had several natural children. Vespucci, the correspondent of Lorenzo, represents him as a weak but well-disposed man, rather formed to be directed himself, than capable of directing others[r].

Succeeded by Giambattista Cibo, who assumes the name of Innocent VIII.

1484.

Lorenzo had perceived the disadvantages under which he laboured in his political transactions,

Lorenzo gains the confidence of the new pope.

[r] Many particulars respecting this pontiff may be found in the letter from Vespucci to Lorenzo, extracted from the documents of Fabroni. *Appx.* No. XLV.

CHAP. VI. actions, on account of his dissensions with the papal see; and he therefore learnt with great satisfaction, that the pope, soon after his elevation, had expressed a very favourable opinion of him, and had even avowed an intention of consulting him on all important occurrences. The power of the other Italian potentates was bounded by the limits of their respective dominions; but Lorenzo was well aware that the Roman pontiff superadded to his temporal possessions an influence that extended throughout all Christendom, and which might be found of the utmost importance to the promotion of his views. He therefore sedulously improved the occasion which the favourable opinion of Innocent afforded him; and in a short time obtained his confidence to such a degree, as to be intrusted with his most secret transactions and most important concerns[s]. This fortunate event also first opened to the Medici the dignities and emoluments of the church, and thereby led the way to that eminent degree

[s] "Assettate che saranno queste vostre cose co' Genovesi, Lorenzo conoscerà che non fu mai Pontefice, che amassi tanto la casa sua quanto io. Et avendo visto per esperienza, quanta sia la fede, integrità & prudentia sua, io farò tosto governarmi secondo i ricordi & pareri sua." Such was the language in which Innocent addressed himself to Pier Filippo Pandolfini, the Florentine ambassadour. *Fabroni in vitâ, v.* ii. *p.* 263.

degree of splendour and prosperity which the family afterwards experienced. CHAP. VI.

The Florentines attempt to recover the town of Sarzana.

To the carrying into effect the pacifick intentions of Lorenzo, several obstacles yet remained. During the commotions in Italy, consequent on the conspiracy of the Pazzi, the town of Sarzana, situated near the boundaries of the Genoese and Florentine dominions, and which the Florentines had purchased from Lodovico Fregoso, had been forcibly wrested from them by Agostino, one of his sons. The important contests in which the Florentines were engaged, had for some time prevented them from attempting the recovery of a place, to which, according to the established custom of the times, they had undoubted pretensions; but no sooner were they relieved from the anxiety and expense of external war, than they bent their whole attention to this object. In order to secure himself against the expected attack, Agostino had made a formal surrender of the town to the republick of Genoa, under which he professed to exercise the government. Lorenzo therefore entertained hopes, that, by the mediation of the new pope, his countrymen the Genoese might be induced to resign their pretensions; but his interference having proved ineffectual, the Florentines prepared to establish their right by arms. The approach

CHAP. VI.

Capture of Pietra-Santa.

approach to Sarzana necessarily lay by the town of Pietra-Santa, the inhabitants of which were expected to remain neuter during the contest; but a detachment of Florentine troops escorting a quantity of provisions and ammunition, passing near that place, were attacked and plundered by the garrison[t]. So unequivocal a demonstration of hostility rendered it necessary for the Florentines, before they proceeded to the attack of Sarzana, to possess themselves of Pietra-Santa. It was accordingly invested, and such artillery as was then in use was employed to reduce the inhabitants to submission. The Genoese, however, found means to reenforce the garrison, whilst the sickness of some of

[t] Machiavelli, pleased in relating instances of that crooked policy in which he is supposed to have been himself an adept, informs us, that the Florentines, wanting a pretext for a rupture with the inhabitants of Pietra-Santa, directed a part of their baggage to pass near that place, for the purpose of inducing the garrison to make an attack upon it. *Hist. lib.* 8. And Fabroni, on what authority it is not easy to discover, expressly attributes this artifice to Lorenzo de' Medici, *in vitâ Laur. v.* i. *p.* 127. But Ammirato, whose veracity is undoubted, asserts that this incident took place without any premeditated design on the part of the Florentines, introducing his narrative with a direct censure of the relation of Machiavelli: "Hor volle più tosto il caso, che artificio "alcuno, il quale và il Machiavelli accattando," &c. *Ist. Fior. lib.* 25.

of the Florentine leaders, and the inactivity of others, contributed to protract the siege. Dispirited by resistance, the count of Pitigliano, one of the Florentine generals, ventured even to recommend to the magistrates of Florence the relinquishment of the enterprise as impracticable, at least for that season. These representations, instead of altering the purpose of Lorenzo, only excited him to more vigorous exertion; by his recommendation, the command of the Florentine troops was given to Bernardo del Nero, and soon afterwards Lorenzo joined the army in person. His presence and exhortations had the most powerful effect on his countrymen. Within the space of a few days after his arrival, the besiegers reduced the place to such extremity, that proposals were made for a capitulation, which were acceded to by Lorenzo; and the town was received into the protection of the Florentine republick, without further molestation to the inhabitants[u].

CHAP. VI.

From Pietra-Santa it was the intention of Lorenzo, notwithstanding the advanced season of the year, to have proceeded immediately to the

Lorenzo retires to the baths of S. Filippo.

[u] *Ammir. Ist. Fior. lib.* 25.

CHAP. VI. the attack of Sarzana; but the long and unhealthy service in which the army had been engaged, rendered a temporary cessation of hostilities indispensable. Several of the principal commanders, together with Antonio Pucci, one of the Florentine commissioners to the army, had fallen victims to the fatigues of the war; and Lorenzo, who laboured under a chronick, and perhaps an hereditary complaint, was soon afterwards obliged to resort to the baths of S. Filippo for relief. Before he recovered his health, his attention was called towards a different quarter, in which all his exertions became necessary to preserve his pacifick system from total destruction.

The pope forms the design of possessing himself of the kingdom of Naples.

1485.

This commotion originated in the turbulent designs of Sixtus IV. who had sown the seeds of it in his lifetime, although they did not spring up till after his death. The Neapolitan nobility, exasperated with the princes of the house of Aragon, who had endeavoured to abridge their power and independence, were prepared, whenever occasion offered, to attempt the recovery of their rights. In restraining the exorbitant power of the nobles, which was equally formidable to the king and oppressive to the people, Ferdinand might have been justified by the expediency

expediency of the measure, and protected by the affections of his subjects; but, in relieving them from the exactions of others, he began to oppress them himself, and thus incautiously incurred that odium, which had before been exclusively bestowed upon his nobility. The spirit of disaffection that soon became apparent was not unobserved by Sixtus, who, in addition to the ambitious motives by which he was generally actuated, felt no small degree of resentment against Ferdinand, for having, without his concurrence, concluded a peace with the Florentines. A secret intercourse was carried on between the pope and the Neapolitan barons, whose resentment was ready to burst out in an open flame when Sixtus died. This event retarded but did not defeat the execution of their purpose. No sooner was Innocent seated in the chair, than they began to renew with him the intercourse which they had carried on with his predecessor. They reminded him that the kingdom of Naples was itself a fief of the Roman see; they represented the exhausted state of the king's finances, and the aversion which he had incurred from his subjects, as well by his own severity, as by the cruelties exercised in his name by the duke of Calabria; and exhorted him to engage in an attempt, the success of which was evident, and would crown his

CHAP. VI. his pontificate with glory[v]. The pacifick temper of Innocent was dazzled with the splendour of such an acquisition. He encouraged the nobility to proceed in their designs; he raised a considerable army, the command of which he gave to Roberto Sanseverino; several of the principal cities of Naples openly revolted, and the standard of the pope was erected at Salerno. On the first indication of hostilities, the king had sent his son John, who had obtained the dignity of a cardinal, to Rome, for the purpose of inducing the pope to relinquish his attempt; but the death of the cardinal blasted the hopes, and added to the distresses of his father[w]. Attacked at the same time by foreign and domestick enemies, Ferdinand saw no shelter from the storm, but in the authority and assistance of Lorenzo. The attachment that subsisted between him and the pope was indeed known to Ferdinand; but he had himself some claims upon his kindness, and had reason to believe that he could not regard with indifference an attempt

[v] *Valor. in vitâ Laur. p.* 51.

[w] His death was attributed to poison, given to him by Antonello Sanseverino, prince of Salerno. *Murat. Ann. v.* ix. *p.* 542. The frequency of these imputations, though perhaps not always founded on fact, strongly marks the character of the age.

attempt which, if successful, would effect a total change in the political state of Italy. Lorenzo did not hesitate on the part it became him to act. No sooner was he apprized of the dangerous situation of Ferdinand, than he left the baths of S. Filippo, and hastened to Florence, where, on his first interview with the envoy of the king, he gave him the most unequivocal assurances of active interference and support. Lorenzo, however, saw the necessity of applying an effectual remedy to the increasing evil, and with a degree of freedom which the urgency of the occasion required, entreated the king to relax in his severity towards his subjects. "It grieves me to the soul," thus he writes to Albino, the Neapolitan envoy, "that the duke "of Calabria should have acquired, even unde- "servedly, the imputation of cruelty. At all "events, he ought to endeavour to remove every "pretext for the accusation, by the most cau- "tious regard to his conduct. If the people "be displeased with the late impositions, it "would be advisable to abolish them, and to "require only the usual payments; for one "*carlino* obtained with good-will and affection, "is better than ten accompanied with dissatis- "faction and resentment." He afterwards remonstrates with the king, through the same channel, on his harsh and imprudent conduct

CHAP. VI.

Lorenzo supports the king.

to

CHAP. VI.

to some merchants, who it appears had been dismissed from Naples, for having demanded from him the monies which they had advanced for his use. "If the king satisfy them not," says he, "by paying their demands, he ought "at least to appease them with good words; to "the end that he may not afford them an op- "portunity of treating his name with disrespect, "and of gaining credit at the same time to what "is, and to what is not true." The reply of Ferdinand to Albino is sufficiently expressive of the respect which he paid to these admonitions[x]; but unfortunately, the precepts which he approved in theory, he forgot to adopt in practice; and to the neglect of these counsels, rather than to the courage or the conduct of Charles VIII. the subsequent expulsion of his family from the kingdom of Naples is unquestionably to be referred.

Prevails upon the Florentines to take a decided part.

The authority of Lorenzo de' Medici in Florence was not the authority of despotism, but that

[x] In reference to this letter of Lorenzo, which may be found in the Appendix, No. XLV. The king replies to Albino, "Lo consiglio de detto Mag. Lorenzo, che "abbiamo li occhi ad tutto, e mostramo in alcuna cosa "non intendere, &c. ci è stato gratissimo, per essere "prudentissimo e sapientissimo."

that of reason; and it therefore became neces- CHAP. VI.
sary, that the measures which he might adopt should meet with the approbation of the citizens at large. He accordingly, without delay, called together the principal inhabitants, but had the mortification to find that the proposition which he laid before them, to afford assistance to the king, was received by his hearers with general disapprobation; some exclaiming against him, as being too precipitate in involving the republick in dangerous and expensive wars; whilst others condemned the freedom with which he opposed the Roman pontiff, and subjected himself and his fellow-citizens to those ecclesiastical censures, the ill effects of which they had so recently experienced. On this occasion, Lorenzo was reminded, that the Venetians would probably unite with the pope in subjugating the kingdom of Naples; in which case, the intervention of the Florentines would only involve them in the same ruin that threatened the Neapolitan state. The solicitations and remonstrances of his fellow-citizens shook not the purpose of Lorenzo. Through the thick mist of popular fears and prejudices, he distinctly saw the beacon of the publick welfare; and the arguments of his adversaries had already been anticipated and refuted in his own mind. That eloquence which he possessed in so eminent a degree

CHAP. VI. a degree was never more successfully exerted; and the reasons that had determined his own judgment were laid before his audience in a manner so impressive, as to overpower all opposition, and induce them unanimously to concur in his opinion. "This oration," says Valori, "as "committed to writing by some of his hearers, "I have myself perused; and it is not possible "to conceive any composition more copious, "more elegant, or more convincing[y]."

The situation of Ferdinand became every day more critical. A general defection of his nobility took place. The two brothers of the family of the Coppula, one of whom was his prime counsellor, and the other the treasurer of the kingdom, held a treacherous correspondence with his enemies; and the duke of Calabria, who had advanced towards Rome to prevent a junction of the pontifical troops with those of the insurgents, was totally defeated by Sanseverino, and obliged to fly for protection into the territories of Florence. It was matter of gratification to some, and of surprise to all, that the very man who, by his sanguinary and tyrannical disposition, had a short time before spread terrour through

[y] *Valor. in vitâ Laur. p.* 53.

through the whole extent of Tuscany, should now appear as a fugitive at Montepulciano, imploring the assistance of the Florentines, and waiting the arrival of Lorenzo de' Medici; who, being prevented by sickness from complying with his expectations, despatched two of the principal citizens to assure the duke of the attachment of the Florentines to the house of Aragon, and of their determination to exert themselves to the utmost in its defence. CHAP. VI.

Effects a reconciliation between the king and the pope.

The military force of the republick, which seldom exceeded five thousand men, would have rendered small service in the contest, and it therefore became necessary to resort to other expedients. By the pecuniary assistance of the Florentines, the duke of Calabria was again enabled to take the field, and at their instance several eminent leaders of Italy engaged in the service of the king. The influence that Lorenzo possessed with Lodovico Sforza was successfully exerted to engage the states of Milan in the same cause. The powerful Roman family of the Orsini was induced not only to discountenance the enterprise of the pope, but to appear openly in arms against him; and Innocent began to dread that the conflagration which he had excited, or encouraged, in the kingdom of Naples, might extend to his own dominions.

At

CHAP. VI. At the same time Lorenzo de' Medici, having still maintained an uninterrupted intercourse with the pope, assailed him with those arguments which he knew were best calculated to produce their effect. He represented the evils and disgrace that must arise to all Christendom, from the frequent example set by the head of the church, of appealing on all occasions to the sword. He pointed out the improbability that the northern powers of Italy would permit the Roman see to annex to its dominions, either directly or indirectly, so extensive a territory as the kingdom of Naples; and earnestly exhorted the pope not to waste his resources, disturb his tranquillity, and endanger his safety, in a conflict which, at best, could only terminate in substituting to the house of Aragon some of those fortunate adventurers who had led the armies employed in its expulsion. Whether the appearances of hostility operated on the fears, or the reasoning of Lorenzo on the judgment of the pope, may remain in doubt; but the ardour with which he engaged in the conflict gradually abated, and Sanseverino was left to avail himself of his own courage, and that of the troops under his command, without receiving either orders to retire, or supplies to enable him to proceed. The languor that became apparent between the contending

tending sovereigns seemed to have communicated itself to their armies; which having met on the eighth day of May 1486, an encounter took place, in which Ammirato not only acknowledges, that not a soldier was slain, but that he had found no memorial that even one of the combatants was wounded, though the contest continued for many hours, and only terminated with the day[z]. In this harmless trial of muscular strength, Sanseverino and his followers were, however, forced off the field, and the consequences were as decisive as if the contest had been of the most sanguinary kind; for the king, availing himself of this circumstance, and apprized by Lorenzo of the favourable alteration in the temper of the pope, lost no time in laying before him such propositions for the accommodation of their dispute, as afforded him an opportunity of declining it with credit to himself, and apparent safety to his Neapolitan confederates. By the conditions of this treaty, the king acknowledged the jurisdiction of the apostolick

CHAP. VI.

1486.

[z] Ecco che nel volersi movere, si venne l' ottavo giorno di maggio al fatto d' arme; se merita di fatto d' arme haver nome una giornata, nella quale non che fosse alcun morto, ma non si fa memoria, che fosse alcun ferito. *Ammir. Ist. Fior. lib.* 25. *p.* 174.

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CHAP. VI.

stolick see, and agreed to pay to the pope a stipulated subsidy. Besides which, he engaged to pardon, freely and unconditionally, the nobles who had revolted against him.

Suppresses the insurrection at Osimo.

The oppressive conduct of the Italian sovereigns, or the restless dispositions of their subjects, seldom admitted of a long continuance of tranquillity; and as Lorenzo had acquired a reputation for impartiality and moderation, the dissensions that occasionally arose were generally submitted to his decision. The political contentions in which the pope was engaged, displayed indeed an ample field for the exercise of his talents. Important as the favour of the Roman see might be to the success of his labours, it was not preserved without an unremitting attention to its interests. In the year 1486, Buccolino Guzzoni, a citizen of Osimo, a part of the papal territories, incited the inhabitants to revolt. The cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, afterwards Julius II. was despatched by the pope to reduce the place to obedience; but threats and entreaties were alike ineffectual, and the inhabitans avowed their resolution to surrender the city to the Turks, rather than again submit to the authority of the pope. From the success of the insurgents, the example began to spread through the adjoining districts; when Lorenzo

Lorenzo despatched Gentile, bishop of Arezzo, with instructions to treat with Buccolino for a reconciliation. What the obstinacy of Buccolino had refused to the representations of the pope, was conceded to those of Lorenzo, under whose sanction the terms of the treaty were speedily concluded, and Buccolino accompanied the ambassadour of Lorenzo to Florence. Muratori informs us, that the artifice by which Lorenzo extricated the pope from his turbulent adversary, was the timely application of some thousands of golden ducats; and this he accompanies with an insinuation, which, if justly founded, would degrade the magnanimous character of Lorenzo to a level with that of his sanguinary and treacherous contemporaries. "Having invited Buccolino to Florence," says that author, "Lorenzo, with great address, "prevailed upon him, for his further security, "to repair to Milan; but the security that he "there found was a halter from the hands of "Lodovico Sforza[a]." If, however, the death of Buccolino, when the contention was over, was of such importance as to induce Lorenzo to the commission of so atrocious a crime, it is scarcely

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[a] *Murat. Ann. v.* ix. *p.* 554. *cit. Raynal. Annal. Eccles.*

CHAP. VI.

scarcely probable that he would have afforded his victim so favourable an opportunity of escaping the blow; but without having recourse to conjecture, a refutation of this calumny may be found in an author who, not being considered as partial to the Medici, may on this occasion be admitted as an authentick witness. "After the surrender of Osimo," says Machiavelli, "Buccolino resided a considerable time at "Florence, under the safeguard of Lorenzo, "honoured and respected. He afterwards "went to Milan, where he did not experience "the same fidelity, having been treacherously "put to death there by Lodovico Sforza[b]."

Capture of Sarzana.

1487.

The remonstrances of the Florentines to the Genoese, to relinquish the dominion of Sarzana, being yet disregarded, and the peaceable intervention of the pope and the duke of Milan appearing to be ineffectual, Lorenzo prepared for a powerful attack; and not only engaged the lords of Piombino, Faenza, Pitigliano, and Bologna in his cause, but applied to the king of Naples for such assistance as he could afford. In his answer to this requisition, Ferdinand confesses his high obligations to Lorenzo, and after

[b] *Mac. lib.* 8.

after lamenting his inability to repay them in a manner adequate to their importance, promises to furnish a supply of ships against the Genoese, and to give such other aid as the embarrassed state of his affairs would permit[c]. The command of the army destined to the attack of Sarzana was given to Jacopo Guicciardini, and Pietro Vittorio, who, having defeated a body of the Genoese, that opposed their progress, began the siege of the place. The resistance which they met with was, however, more obstinate than might have been expected. Impatient of the delay, Lorenzo resolved to join the army, and endeavour by his presence to promote the exertions of the commanders, and excite the ardour of the soldiery. His exhortations, addressed personally to every rank and denomination, produced an instantaneous effect: a vigorous attack was made; and the citizens, perceiving no prospect of further succour from the Genoese, surrendered at the discretion of the conquerors. It is not improbable, that the remembrance of the disaster which took place on the surrender of Volterra had operated as an additional motive with Lorenzo to be present at the capture of Sarzana; however this may be,

[c] *v. Appx. No.* XLVI.

CHAP. VI. be, his conduct was marked with the greatest clemency to the inhabitants, and the city was received into the protection of the Florentine state, to which it was only desirable, as opposing a barrier to the incursions of the Genoese. Elated with conquest, the Florentine commanders wished to carry the war into the states of Genoa; but Lorenzo opposed himself to this design; justly conceiving it to be inconsistent with the interests of his country and his own character to destroy that general equilibrium of the Italian states, which his utmost endeavours were constantly exerted to maintain. The apprehensions entertained by the Genoese were productive, however, of consequences as unfavourable to their liberties, as any which they could have experienced from a hostile invasion. To secure themselves from the expected attack, they surrendered their states to the duke of Milan, probably with the intention of again asserting their independence as soon as they had an opportunity; an artifice to which they had frequently resorted on former occasions[d].

In the conduct of Lorenzo towards the smaller governments in the vicinity of Florence, he

[d] *Murat. Annal. v.* ix. *p.* 555.

he gave a striking instance of prudence and moderation. Instead of seeking for pretences to subjugate them, he, upon all occasions, afforded them the most effectual aid in resisting every effort to deprive them of their independence. In his estimation, these were the true barriers of the Tuscan territory. By the constant intercourse which he maintained with the subordinate sovereigns, and the chief nobility of Italy, he was enabled to perceive the first indications of disagreement, and to extinguish the sparks before they had kindled into a flame. The city of Perugia was held by the Baglioni, Castello by the Vitelli, Bologna by the Bentivoli, and Faenza by the Manfredi; all of whom resorted to him as the umpire of their frequent dissensions, and their protector from the resentment, or the rapacity, of their more powerful neighbours. Innumerable occasions presented themselves, in which the Florentines might have extended the limits of their dominions; but it was uniformly the policy of Lorenzo, rather to secure what the state already possessed, than, by aiming at more extensive territory, to endanger the whole; and so fully did he accomplish his purpose, that the acute, but profligate Lodovico Sforza, was accustomed to say, "*That "Lorenzo had converted into iron what he found "fabricated*

Lorenzo protects the smaller states of Italy.

CHAP. VI.

" *fabricated of glass*[e]." The views of Lorenzo were not, however, limited by the boundaries that divide Italy from the rest of Europe. The influence of other states upon the politicks of that country was daily increasing. He had therefore, at almost every court, envoys and correspondents, on whose talents and integrity he had the greatest reliance; and who gave him minute and early information of every circumstance that might affect the general tranquillity. By these men, he heard, he saw, he felt every motion and every change of the political machine, and was often enabled to give it an impulse where it was supposed to be far beyond the limits of his power. In conducting a negotiation, all circumstances seemed to concur in rendering him successful; but these were not the effects of chance, but of deep and premeditated arrangement. Knowing the route he had to take, the obstacles that might have obstructed his progress were cautiously removed, before his opponents were apprized of his intentions. Hence, as one of the Florentine annalists expresses it[f], he became the balance point of the Italian

[e] *Fabr. in vitâ Laur. vol.* i. *p.* 181.

[f] Era venuto Lorenzo in tanta riputazione e auto-
" rità appresso gli altri principi d'Italia, &c., che tutti
" gli

Italian potentates, whose affairs he kept in such just equilibrium as to prevent the preponderancy of any particular state. Surrounded as he was by ambitious despots, who knew no restraint except that of compulsion, or by restless communities constantly springing up with elastick vigour against the hand that pressed them; it was only by unwearied attention that he could curb the overbearing, relieve the oppressed, allay their mutual jealousy, and preserve them from perpetual contention. By inducing them to grasp at unsubstantial advantages, he placed in their hands real blessings; and by alarming them with imaginary terrours, averted their steps from impending destruction.

We have already seen, that by the terms of the treaty between the pope and the king of Naples, Ferdinand was to pay an annual subsidy to

The king of Naples infringes his treaty with the pope.

" gli Scrittori di que' tempi, e le memorie ancora degli " uomini, che vivono, e che sono vivuti a tempi nostri, " unitamente s' accordano, che, mentre ch' egli visse fu " sempre l' ago della bilancia intra i principi predetti, " che mantenne bilanciati gli stati loro, e di tal maniera " gli tenne uniti, e ciascuno di essi ristretti dentro a' " termini de' loro confini, che si potette dipoi, dopo la " sua morte, vedere questa verità detta di sopra," &c.

Filipi. de' Nerli, Comment. de' Fatti civile di Fir. lib. 3. Ed. Ven. 1782.

CHAP. VI. to the Roman see, and was also to grant an unconditional pardon to his refractory nobles. The latter of these conditions he immediately broke, and the other he only adhered to as long as he conceived that the pope was able to compel its performance. The cruelty and perfidy shewn by Ferdinand, in his treatment of the Neapolitan nobility, fixes an indelible stain upon his character; but the operations of the moral world are not less certain than those of the natural, and the treachery of Ferdinand brought forth in due time its fruits of bitterness. It is true indeed, as Muratori well observes, "God does "not always repay in this world, nor are his "judgments laid open to us; but if we may on "any occasion be allowed to interpret them, it is "when they seem to be the retribution of cruelty. "In fact, the calamities of Ferdinand were not long "postponed. The lapse of a few years deprived "him of life, and his posterity of the kingdom "of Naples. Surely, he can never be worthy "to rule over a people, who knows not how to "forgive[s]."

The refusal of Ferdinand to comply with his engagements, again roused the resentment of the

[s] "Certo non sarà giammai degno di reggere popoli, "chi non sa mai perdonare." *Murat. Ann. v.* ix. *p.* 556.

the pope, the inadequacy of whose temporal arms to enforce his pretensions, was supplied by the spiritual terrours of excommunication. On this occasion, the intervention of Lorenzo de' Medici again became necessary. A long negotiation ensued, in the progress of which he availed himself of every opportunity afforded him by the circumstances of the times, the temper of the parties, and his own credit and authority, to prevent the disagreement from proceeding to an open rupture. Of his letters written in the course of these transactions, some are yet preserved, which, whilst they display the refined policy and deep discernment of their author, demonstrate how assiduously he laboured to avert the calamities of war. "It appears "to me" says he, writing to Lanfredini his confidential envoy at Rome, who was to lay these representations before the pope, "that his holi- "ness must propose to himself one of these three "things; either to compel the king by force to "comply with his requisition; or to compromise "matters with him on the most advantageous "terms that can be obtained; or, lastly, to tem- "porize till something better may be effected." He then enters into a full discussion of the difficulties and dangers that seem likely to attend the making an hostile attack on the kingdom of Naples. He lays before the pope the situation not only

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Peace again restored.

CHAP. VI. At the same time Lorenzo de' Medici, having still maintained an uninterrupted intercourse with the pope, assailed him with those arguments which he knew were best calculated to produce their effect. He represented the evils and disgrace that must arise to all Christendom, from the frequent example set by the head of the church, of appealing on all occasions to the sword. He pointed out the improbability that the northern powers of Italy would permit the Roman see to annex to its dominions, either directly or indirectly, so extensive a territory as the kingdom of Naples; and earnestly exhorted the pope not to waste his resources, disturb his tranquillity, and endanger his safety, in a conflict which, at best, could only terminate in substituting to the house of Aragon some of those fortunate adventurers who had led the armies employed in its expulsion. Whether the appearances of hostility operated on the fears, or the reasoning of Lorenzo on the judgment of the pope, may remain in doubt; but the ardour with which he engaged in the conflict gradually abated, and Sanseverino was left to avail himself of his own courage, and that of the troops under his command, without receiving either orders to retire, or supplies to enable him to proceed. The languor that became apparent between the contending

tending sovereigns seemed to have communicated itself to their armies; which having met on the eighth day of May 1486, an encounter took place, in which Ammirato not only acknowledges, that not a soldier was slain, but that he had found no memorial that even one of the combatants was wounded, though the contest continued for many hours, and only terminated with the day[z]. In this harmless trial of muscular strength, Sanseverino and his followers were, however, forced off the field, and the consequences were as decisive as if the contest had been of the most sanguinary kind; for the king, availing himself of this circumstance, and apprized by Lorenzo of the favourable alteration in the temper of the pope, lost no time in laying before him such propositions for the accommodation of their dispute, as afforded him an opportunity of declining it with credit to himself, and apparent safety to his Neapolitan confederates. By the conditions of this treaty, the king acknowledged the jurisdiction of the apostolick

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1486.

[z] Ecco che nel volersi movere, si venne l' ottavo giorno di maggio al fatto d' arme; se merita di fatto d' arme haver nome una giornata, nella quale non che fosse alcun morto, ma non si fa memoria, che fosse alcun ferito. *Ammir. Ist. Fior. lib.* 25. *p.* 174.

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Review of the government of Florence.

The external concerns of the republick being thus happily adjusted, and the tranquillity of Italy secured, Lorenzo applied himself to the regulation of the internal discipline of the Florentine state. The government of this city was founded on the broadest basis of democratick equality. By its fundamental principles, every person who contributed by his industry to the support or aggrandizement of the state, had a right to share in the direction of it, either by delegating his power to others, or in exercising a portion of the supreme control, under the suffrages of his fellow-citizens. Inactivity was the only circumstance that incapacitated him from the enjoyment of political rights. The Florentines, as early as the year 1282, had classed themselves into distinct bodies, or municipal companies, according to their various professions; and in order to place their government on a truly popular foundation, had determined, that no person should be eligible to a publick office, unless he were either actually, or professedly, a member of one or other of these companies. By this regulation, the nobility were either excluded from the offices

" regno, il quale beneficio noi nè i nostri discendenti mai " si hanno a scordare." *Pet. Lutetii Ep. ad Laur. Fab.* v. ii. *p.* 369. These obligations are also warmly acknowledged by Ferdinand in a letter to Lorenzo himself.

v. App. No. XLVIII.

offices of the state, or, in order to obtain them, were obliged to degrade the honours of their rank by the humiliating appellation of artizan[k]. From these associated bodies, a certain number of members were deputed to exercise the supreme government, in conjunction with an officer, whom we have frequently mentioned by the name of Gonfaloniere, whose authority was, however, subordinate to that of the delegated mechanicks, or *Priori delle arti*, who continued in office only two months, and from three in number, had increased, at various intervals, to six, to eight, and lastly to ten[l]. This institution

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[k] Et sopra tutto parve, che si havesse havuto riguardo à fondar uno stato affatto popolare, non volendo che fussono ricevute al governo persone, che non fussero comprese sotto il nome, e insegna d' alcuna arte; eziandio che quelle arti non esercitassero; perciochè si come non stimavano cosa conveniente il levar in tutto il governo di mano de' nobili, così giudicavano esser necessario, che almeno col nome che prendevano, deponessero parte dell' alterigia che porgea loro quella boriosa voce della nobiltà. *Ammir. Ist. lib.* iii. *v.* i. *p.* 160.

[l] The jealous temper of the Florentines, in providing for the security of their liberties, is exquisitely satirized by their first poet:

Or ti fa lieta, che tu hai ben onde,
Tu ricca, tu con pace, tu con senno;
S'i' dico 'l ver, l' effetto nol nasconde.

Atene

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tion had, in the time of Lorenzo de' Medici, subsisted nearly two hundred years, during which the office of Gonfaloniere had been filled by a regular succession of twelve hundred citizens, who had preserved the dignity and independence of the republick, and secured to their countrymen the exercise of their rights. With this laudable jealousy of their own liberties, the Florentines did not, like the Romans, from whom they derived their origin, exert their power to destroy the liberties of others. They wisely repressed the dangerous desire of subjecting to their dominion surrounding states, nor aspired to the invidious honour of sparing the subservient and overturning the proud; and, though a com-

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Atene, e Lacedemona, che fenno
L' antiche leggi, e furon sì civili,
Fecero al viver bene un picciol senno
Verso di te, che fai tanto sottili
Provvedimenti ch'a mezzo Novembre
Non giunge quel, che tu d' Ottobre fili.
Quante volte del tempo, che rimembre
Legge, moneta, e uficio, e costume,
Ha' tu mutato, e rinnovato membre?
E se ben ti ricorda, e vedi lume,
Vedrai te simigliante a quell' infirma,
Che, non può trovar posa in sulle piume
Ma con dar volta suo dolore scherma.

Dante. Purg. Cant. vi.

a community of freemen, they were content to be the first in those accomplishments which the flatterer of Augustus affected to despise[m]. CHAP. VI.

There is, however, reason to conjecture, that the Florentine government, although sufficiently vigorous for internal regulation, was inadequate to the exertions of external warfare. The hand that may steer a vessel through the tranquil ocean, may be unable to direct the helm amidst the fury of the storm. It may indeed well be conceived, that the delegated magistrates, being so extremely limited, as well with respect to their number, as to the duration of their power, would reluctantly determine on, and cautiously engage in measures, which involved the welfare, and perhaps the existence of the community. Accordingly it appears, that on important occasions it was customary for the magistrates to assemble the most respectable citizens, Regulations introduced by Lorenzo.

[m] Excudent alii spirantia mollius æra,
Credo equidem, vivos ducent de marmore vultus,
Orabunt causas melius, cœlique meatus
Describent radio, et surgentia sidera dicent:
Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento,
(Hæ tibi erunt artes,) pacique imponere morem,
Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.
Æn. lib. vi.

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citizens, from whose advice they might derive assistance, and by whose countenance they might secure themselves from censure. During the late dangerous contest, this measure had been frequently resorted to, and with such manifest advantage, that Lorenzo, after the restoration of the publick tranquillity, recommended, and obtained the establishment of a body of seventy citizens, who, in the nature of a senate, were to deliberate and to decide on all the transactions of government, as well in the affairs of peace, as of war. This institution, for which he might have pleaded the example of the Spartan legislator, was probably intended, not only to give a greater degree of stability and energy to the government, but to counteract the democratick spirit, which was supposed to have risen to a dangerous excess[n], and to operate as a safeguard against an abuse which was certainly the destruction of all the free states of antiquity—the exercise of the powers of government by the immediate interference of the citizens at large.

At

[n] "All free governments," says Hume, very decisively, "must consist of two councils, a lesser and "greater; or in other words, of a senate and people." "The people," as Harrington observes, "would want "wisdom without the senate; the senate, without the "people, would want honesty."

Idea of a perfect Commonwealth.

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Prosperity of the Florentine state.

1488.

At this period the city of Florence was at its highest degree of prosperity. The vigilance of Lorenzo had secured it from all apprehensions of external attack; and his acknowledged disinterestedness and moderation had almost extinguished that spirit of dissension for which it had been so long remarkable. The Florentines gloried in their illustrious citizen, and were gratified in numbering in their body a man who wielded in his hands the fate of nations, and attracted the respect and admiration of all Europe. Though much inferior in population, extent of dominion, and military character to several of the other states of Italy, Florence stood at this time in the first degree of respectability. The active spirit of its inhabitants, no longer engaged in hostile contentions, displayed itself in the pursuits of commerce and the improvement of their manufactures. Equally enterprizing and acute, wherever there appeared a possibility of profit, or of fame, they were the first to avail themselves of it; and a Florentine adventurer, though with doubtful pretensions, has erected to himself a monument which the proudest conqueror might envy, and impressed his name upon a new world in characters that are now indelible[o]. The silk and

[o] Amerigo Vespucci, who has contended with Columbus for the honour of the discovery of America, was

CHAP. VI. and linen fabricks manufactured by the Florentines were in a great degree wrought from their native productions; but their wool was imported from England and from Spain, whose inhabitants indolently resigned their natural advantages, and

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was born at Florence in the year 1451, of a respectable family, of which several individuals had enjoyed the chief offices of the republick. The name of Amerigo was at Florence a common name of baptism. For an account of the controversy that has taken place respecting the pretensions of these eminent navigators, I must refer to Dr. Robertson's History of America, *book* ii. *note* 22. without, however, approving the severity of his animadversions on the respectable Canonico Bandini, who has endeavoured, from original and almost contemporary documents, to support the claims of his countryman. *Band. vita di Amerigo Vesp. Flor.* 1745. However this may be, it is certain, that about the year 1507, Vespucci resided at Seville, with the title of master pilot, and with authority to examine all other pilots: for which he had a salary assigned him; an employment, as Tiraboschi well observes, suitable to a skilful navigator, but far below the pretensions of a man who had first discovered the new continent. This employment, however, afforded Vespucci an opportunity of rendering his name immortal. As he designed the charts for navigation, he uniformly denominated that continent by the name of AMERICA, which being adopted by other mariners and navigators, soon became general. *Tirab. Storia della Let. Ital. v.* 6 *par.* i. *p.* 192. The memory of Vespucci is therefore now secured by a memorial,

Quod non imber edax, non aquilo impotens
Possit diruere, aut innumerabilis
Annorum series, et fuga temporum.

and purchased again, at an extravagant price, their own commodities. In almost every part to which the Florentines extended their trade, they were favoured with peculiar privileges, which enabled them to avail themselves of the riches they had already acquired; and the superstitious prohibitions of the clergy against usury were of little avail against a traffick in which the rich found employment for their wealth, and the powerful relief in their necessities. The consequence of these industrious exertions was a sudden increase of population in Florence; insomuch that Lorenzo was under the necessity of applying to the pope, for his permission to build in the gardens of the monasteries within the walls of the city. By his attention, the police was also effectually reformed. A contemporary author assures us, that there was no part of Italy where the people were more regular in their conduct, or where atrocious crimes were less frequent[p]. "We have here," says he, "no robberies, no nocturnal commotions, no "assassinations. By night or by day every "person may transact his concerns in perfect "safety. Spies and informers are here un- "known. The accusation of one is not suffered "to

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[p] *Philippus Redditus Exhort. ad Pet. Med. Laur. fil. inter opusc. Joan. Lamii. Delic. Erudit. Flor.* 1742.

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" to affect the safety of the many; for it is a " maxim with Lorenzo, *that it is better to confide " in all than in a few.*" From the same authority we learn, that the due administration of justice engaged his constant attention, and that he carefully avoided giving rise to an idea, that he was himself above the control of the law. Where compulsory regulations lost their effect, the assiduity and example of Lorenzo produced the most salutary consequences, and banished that dissipation which enervates, and that indolence which palsies society. By forming institutions for the cultivation of the ancient languages, or the discussion of philosophical truths, by promoting the sciences, and encouraging the useful and ornamental arts, he stimulated talents into action, and excited an emulation which called forth all the powers of the mind. Even the publick spectacles, intended for the gratification of the multitude, partook of the polished character of the inhabitants, and were conceived with ingenuity, and enlivened with wit. The prosperity and happiness which the citizens thus enjoyed were attributed to their true source, and Lorenzo received the best reward of his labours in the gratitude of his country.

High reputation of Lorenzo.

Beyond the limits of Tuscany, the character of this illustrious Florentine was yet more eminently

nently conspicuous. The glory of the republick appeared at a distance to be concentred in himself. To him, individually, ambassadours were frequently despatched by the first monarchs of Europe; who, as their concerns required, alternately courted his assistance or solicited his advice[q]. In the year 1489, when the emperour Frederick III. sent an embassy to Rome, he directed them to pass through Florence to obtain the patronage of Lorenzo; being, as he said, convinced of his importance in directing the affairs of Italy. An interchange of kind offices subsisted between this eminent citizen and John II. king of Portugal, who was deservedly dignified with the appellation of Great, and was desirous that the transactions of his life should be recorded by the pen of Politiano[r]. From Matteo

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[q] C'étoit une chose aussi admirable qu' éloignée de nos mœurs, de voir ce citoyen, qui faisait toûjours le commerce, vendre d'une main les denrées du Levant, & soutenir de l'autre le fardeau de la republique; entretenir des facteurs, & recevoir des ambassadeurs; résister au pape, faire la guerre & la paix, être l'oracle des princes, cultiver les belles-lettres, donner des spectacles au peuple, & accueillir tous les scavans Grecs de Constantinople. Il égala le grand *Cosme* par ses bienfaits, & le surpassa par sa magnificence.

Volt. Essai, v. ij. *p.* 284.

[r] *Pol. Epist. lib.* x. *Ep.* 1, 2.

CHAP. VI. Matteo Corvino, whose virtues had raised him to the throne of Hungary, many letters addressed to Lorenzo are yet extant, which demonstrate not only the warm attachment of that monarch to the cause of science and the arts, but his esteem and veneration for the man whom he considered as their most zealous protector[s]. As the reputation of Lorenzo increased, the assiduities of Louis XI. of France became more conspicuous; and in exchange for professions of esteem, which from such a quarter could confer no honour, we find him soliciting from Lorenzo substantial favours[t]. The commercial intercourse between Florence and Egypt, by means of which the Florentines carried on their lucrative traffick in the productions of the east, was extended and improved by Lorenzo; and such was the estimation in which he was held by the sultan, that, in the year 1487, an ambassadour arrived at Florence, bringing with him, as a mark of his master's esteem, many singular presents

[s] These letters are preserved in the *Palazzo Vecchio*, at Florence. *Filz.* xlvii.

[t] A letter from Louis XI. to Lorenzo, most earnestly entreating his assistance in promoting the interests of the king's favourites in a proposed nomination of cardinals by Innocent VIII. is preserved in the *Palazzo Vecchio*. *Filz.* lix.

sents of rare animals and valuable commodities; amongst the former of which, a camelopardalis principally attracted the curiosity of the populace[u]. CHAP. VI.

This epoch forms one of those scanty portions in the history of mankind, on which we may dwell without weeping over the calamities, or blushing for the crimes of our species. Accordingly, the fancy of the poet, expanding in the gleam of prosperity, has celebrated these times as realizing the beautiful fiction of the golden age[v]. This season of tranquillity is the interval to which Guicciardini so strikingly adverts, in the commencement of his history, as being "prosperous beyond any other that Italy "had experienced, during the long course of a "thousand years. When the whole extent of "that fertile and beautiful country was culti-"vated, not only throughout its wide plains and "fruitful General tranquillity of Italy.

[u] Of these articles Pietro da Bibbiena, the secretary of Lorenzo, gives an inventory to Clarice his wife. *v. Appi. No.* XLIX. *Fabr.* ii. 337.

[v] From the numerous pieces which allude to this period, I shall select the poem of Aurelius (or Lippo) Brandolini, *De laudibus Laurentii Medicis*, as it is given in the *Carmina illust. Poet. Ital. v.* ii. *p.* 439. A collection now very rarely met with. *v. Appi. No.* L.

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" fruitful vallies, but even amidst its most ste-
" ril and mountainous regions; and under no
" control but that of its native nobility and
" rulers, exulted, not only in the number and
" riches of its inhabitants, but in the magnifi-
" cence of its princes, in the splendour of many
" superb and noble cities, and in the residence
" and majesty of religion itself. Abounding
" with men eminent in the administration of
" publick affairs, skilled in every honourable
" science and every useful art, it stood high in
" the estimation of foreign nations. Which
" extraordinary felicity, acquired at many dif-
" ferent opportunities, several circumstances
" contributed to preserve; but amongst the rest,
" no small share of it was, by general consent,
" ascribed to the industry and the virtue of
" Lorenzo de' Medici; a citizen, who rose so
" far beyond the mediocrity of a private station,
" that he regulated by his counsels the affairs of
" Florence, then more important by its situation,
" by the genius of its inhabitants, and the promp-
" titude of its resources, than by the extent of
" its dominions; and who, having obtained the
" implicit confidence of the Roman pontiff
" Innocent VIII. rendered his name great, and
" his authority important in the affairs of Italy.
" Convinced of the perils that might arise, both
" to the Florentine republick and to himself, if
" any

" any of the more powerful states should be " allowed to extend their dominions, he used " every exertion that the affairs of Italy might " be so balanced, that there should be no incli- " nation in favour of any particular state; a cir- " cumstance which could not take place without " the permanent establishment of peace, and " the minutest attention to every event, how- " ever trivial it might appear." Such are the representations of this celebrated historian. It is only to be regretted that these prosperous days were of such short duration. Like a momentary calm that precedes the ravages of the tempest, they were scarcely enjoyed before they were past. The fabrick of the publick happiness, erected by the vigilance, and preserved by the constant care of Lorenzo, remained indeed firm and compact during the short remainder of his days; but at his death it dissolved like the work of enchantment, and overwhelmed for a time in its ruins even the descendants of its founder.

CHAP. VII.

DIFFERENT progress of Italian and classical literature—Latin writings of Dante, Petrarca, and Boccaccio—Effects produced by them—Emanuel Chrysoloras—Consequences of improvement—Progress of the Laurentian Library—Introduction of printing in Florence—Early editions of the classick authors—Politiano corrects the Pandects of Justinian—Miscellanea of Politiano—His controversy with Merula—Establishment of the Greek academy at Florence—Joannes Argyropylus—Demetrius Chalcondyles—English scholars at Florence—Political importance obtained by men of learning—Florentine secretaries—Bartolommeo Scala—His controversy with Politiano—Learned statesmen in other governments of Italy—Men of rank devote themselves to study—Pico of Mirandula—Learned women—Alessandra Scala—Cassandra Fidelis—Result of the attention shown to classical learning—Translations—Italian writers of Latin poetry—Landino—Ugolino and Michael Verini—Other Latin poets of the fifteenth century—Character of the Latin poetry of Politiano—General idea of the state of literature in Florence in the latter part of the fifteenth century.

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Different progress of Italian and classical literature.

Of the improvement that took place in the Italian language in the fourteenth century, of its rapid and unexpected decline in that which succeeded, and of its restoration under the auspices of Lorenzo de' Medici, some account has already been given; but in tracing the history of the revival and progress of the ancient languages, we shall find, that as they were influenced by other causes, they neither flourished nor declined with the study of the national tongue. On the contrary, a daily proficiency

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ficiency was made in classical literature, at the very time that the Italian language was again sinking into barbarism and neglect; and the former advanced, by a gradual but certain progress, towards that perfection which the latter suddenly and unexpectedly attained, from the causes to which we have before adverted.

Latin writings of Dante, Petrarca, and Boccaccio.

In assigning the reason for this remarkable distinction, we must again recur to the times of Dante, of Petrarca, and of Boccaccio; and observe the effects produced by the exertions of those great men, whose talents throw a lustre over a period which would otherwise be involved in total darkness. In estimating their labours, we shall find that their various attempts to reduce into form their native language, and to revive the study of the ancient tongues, were not only attended with different degrees of success, but were followed by consequences precisely the reverse of those which might have been expected. With whatever justice Petrarca and Boccaccio might, in their own days, have boasted of their voluminous productions in the Latin tongue, the increasing applause bestowed on their Italian writings soon obscured their fame as Latin authors; and they are indebted for their present celebrity to works which they almost blushed to own, and were ashamed to communicate to each other.

other[a]. The different merits of their Latin and their Italian compositions were, however, soon appreciated; and whilst the latter were daily rising in the estimation of the world, the former lost a great share of their reputation before the close of the succeeding century. "It is not to be denied," says a very judicious critick of that period[b], "that both Dante and "Petrarca were warm admirers of the ancients; "but the Latin writings of Dante, like a picture "that has lost its colour, exhibit little more "than an outline. Happy indeed had it been, "had this author been enabled to convey his "sentiments in Latin, as advantageously as he "has done in his native tongue. The numerous "works

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[a] The Decamerone of Boccaccio was not communicated to Petrarca till many years after it was written (*Manni, Illust. del Boccaccio, p.* 629.); and Petrarca himself confesses, that the reception of his Italian writings was far more favourable than he expected.

S'io avessi pensato che ai care,
Fossin le voci de' sospir miei in rima,
Fatte l' avrei dal sospirar mio prima,
In numero più spesse, in stil più rare.

Son. 253.

[b] *Paulus Cortesius, De Hominibus doctis, p.* 7. *Ed. Flor.* 1734.

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" works of Petrarca, the offspring of that soli-
" tude in which he delighted, are lasting monu-
" ments of his industry and his talents. Yet
" his style is harsh, and scarcely bears the
" character of Latinity. His writings are indeed
" full of thought, but defective in expression,
" and display the marks of labour without the
" polish of elegance; but as we sometimes take
" a potion, not for the sake of gratification, but
" of health, so from these writings we must
" expect to derive utility rather than amuse-
" ment. Rude as they are, they possess, how-
" ever, some secret charm which renders them
" engaging. The distinguished talents of Boc-
" caccio sunk under the pressure of the general
" malady. Licentious and inaccurate in his
" diction, he has no idea of selection. All his
" Latin writings are hasty, crude, and unin-
" formed. He labours with thought, and
" struggles to give it utterance; but his senti-
" ments find no adequate vehicle, and the
" lustre of his native talents is obscured by the
" depraved taste of the times." Whilst such was the fate of the Latin productions of these authors, their Italian writings were the objects rather of adoration than applause. No longer confined to the perusal of the closet, and the gratification of an individual, the poems of Dante and of Petrarca were read in publick assemblies of the

the inhabitants of Florence, and their beauties pointed out, or their obscurities illustrated, by the most eminent scholars of the time. No sooner was the art of printing discovered, than copies of them were multiplied with an avidity which demonstrates the high esteem in which they were held. Even the prolix annotations with which these early editions were generally accompanied, if they do not for the most part display the talents of the critick, are a proof of the celebrity of the author. This observation is not, however, applicable to the commentary of Dante by Landino, who, with a laudable perseverance, has preserved the remembrance of many historical facts, and related many circumstances indispensably necessary to the explanation of the *Divina Commedia*. His industry in the execution of a task so grateful to his countrymen, was rewarded by the donation of a villa, or residence, on the hill of Casentino, in the vicinity of Florence, which he enjoyed under the sanction of a publick decree. Whilst the annotator was thus compensated, the exiled poet was, upwards of a century after his death, restored to his family honours, with the same formalities as if he had been still living; his descendants were permitted to enjoy the possessions of their illustrious ancestor, and his bust, crowned with laurels, was raised at the publick expense.

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Effect produced by them.

It might then have been expected, that the successful efforts of these authors to improve their native tongue would have been more effectual than the weak, though laudable attempts made by them to revive the study of the ancient languages; but it must be remembered, that they were all of them men of genius, and genius assimilates not with the character of the age. Homer and Shakspeare had no imitators, and are no models. The example of such talents is perhaps, upon the whole, unfavourable to the general progress of improvement; and the superlative abilities of a few have more than once damped the ardour of a nation[c]. But if the great Italian authors were inimitable in the productions of their native language, in their Latin writings they appeared in a subordinate character.

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[c] Dopo la morte di Cicerone e di Vergilio due chiarissimi specchi della lingua Latina, cominciò il modo dello scrivere Romanamente, così in versi come in prosa, a mutarsi & variare da se medesimo, e andò tanto di mano in mano peggiorando, che non era quasi più quel desso. Il medesimo nè più nè meno avvenne nella lingua fiorentina; perche spenti Dante, il Petrarca, e'l Boccaccio, cominciò a variare e mutarsi il modo e la guisa del favellare e dello scrivere fiorentinamente, e tanta andò di male in peggio che quasi non si riconosceva più, &c.

Varchi L' Ercolano, vol. i. *p.* 83. *Ed. Padova* 1744.

character. Of the labours of the ancients, enough had been discovered to mark the decided difference between their merits and those of their modern imitators; and the applauses bestowed upon the latter were only in proportion to the degree in which they approached the models of ancient eloquence. This competition was therefore eagerly entered into; nor had the success of the first revivers of these studies deprived their followers of the hope of surpassing them[d]. Even the early part of the fifteenth century produced scholars as much superiour to Petrarca, and his coadjutors, as they were to the monkish compilers, and scholastick disputants, who immediately preceded them; and the labours of Leonardo Aretino, Gianozzo Manetti, Guarino Veronese, and Poggio Bracciolini, prepared the way for the still more correct and classical productions of Politiano, Sannazaro, Pontano, and Augurelli. The declining state of Italian

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[d] Difficilis in perfecto mora est; naturaliterque quod procedere non potest, recedit. Et, ut primo ad consequendos, quos priores ducimus, accendimur; ita ubi aut præteriri aut æquari eos posse desperavimus, studium cum spe senescit; et quod adsequi non potest, sequi desinit: præteritoque eo in quo eminere non possimus, aliquid in quo nitamur conquirimus. *Velleius Paterc. lib.* i. *cap.* 17.

CHAP. VII. Italian literature, so far then from being inconsistent with, was rather a consequence of the proficiency made in other pursuits, which, whilst they were distinguished by a greater degree of celebrity, demanded a more continued attention, and an almost absolute devotion both of talents and of time.

Emanuel Chrysoloras.

Whatever may have been the opinion in more modern times, the Italian scholars of the fifteenth century did not attribute to the exertions of their own countrymen the restoration of ancient learning. That they had shown a decided predilection for those studies, and had excited an ardent thirst of further knowledge, is universally allowed; but the source from which that thirst was allayed, was found in Emanuel Chrysoloras, who, after his return to his native country from his important embassies, was prevailed upon by the Florentines to pay a second visit to Italy, and to fix his residence among them. The obligations due to Chrysoloras are acknowledged in various parts of their works, by those who availed themselves of his instructions; and the gratitude of his immediate hearers was transfused into a new race of scholars, who by their eulogies on their literary patriarch, but much more by their own talents, conferred honour

honour upon his memory[e]. On his arrival in Italy in the character of an instructer, he was accompanied by Demetrius Cydonius, another learned Greek. The ardour with which they were

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[e] Chrysoloras died at Constance, when the council was held there in 1415. A volume, consisting of eulogies upon him, lately existed in the monastery at *Camaldoli*. (*Zeno. Diss. Voss. v.* i. *p.* 214.) Poggio and Eneas Sylvius (Pius II.) each of them honoured him with an epitaph. In the latter the merit of having been the reviver of both Greek and Latin literature, is explicitly attributed to him.

Ille ego, qui Latium priscas imitarier artes,
Explosis docui sermonum ambagibus, et qui
Eloquium magni DEMOSTHENIS et CICERONIS
In lucem retuli, CHRYSOLORAS nomine notus,
Hic situs emoriens, peregrina sede, quiesco, &c.

Hod. de Græc. illust. p. 24.

Janus Pannonius, a scholar of Guarino Veronese, (for whose history and unhappy fate, *v. Valerianus De infelicitate Literatorum*,) in an elegant Latin panegyrick on his preceptor, also pays a tribute of respect to the Greek scholar:

Vir fuit hic patrio CHRYSOLORAS nomine dictus,
Candida Mercurio quem Calliopæa crearat,
Nutrierat Pallas: nec solis ille parentum
Clarus erat studiis, sed rerum protinus omnem
Naturam magna complexus mente tenebat.

Jani Pannonii Quinquecclesiensis Episc. Paneg. ad Guar. Ver. præceptorem suum ap. Frobenium. Basil. 1518. *p.* 11.

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were received by the Italian scholars may be conjectured from a letter of Coluccio Salutati to Demetrius, on his landing at Venice[f]. "I rejoice not so much," says he, "in the honour "I receive from your notice, as for the interests "of literature. At a time when the study of "the Greek language is nearly lost, and the "minds of men are wholly engrossed by ambition, voluptuousness, or avarice, you appear "as the messengers of the Divinity, bearing the "torch of knowledge into the midst of our "darkness. Happy indeed shall I esteem myself, (if this life can afford any happiness to a "man to whom tomorrow will bring the close "of his sixty-fifth year,) if I should by your "assistance imbibe those principles from which "all the knowledge which this country possesses is wholly derived. Perhaps, even yet, the "example of Cato may stimulate me to devote "to this study the little that remains of life, and "I may yet add to my other acquirements, a "knowledge of the Grecian tongue."

Consequences of improvement.

If we advert to the night of thick darkness in which the world had been long enveloped, we

[f] *Mehus, in vitâ Amb. Trav. p.* 356. This early visiter has escaped the researches of Dr. Hody. *De Græc. Illust.*

we may easily conceive the sensations that took place in the minds of men when the gloom began to disperse, and the spectres of false science, by turns fantastick and terrifick, gave way to the distinct and accurate forms of nature and of truth. The Greeks who visited Italy in the early part of the fifteenth century, if they did not diffuse a thorough knowledge of their language, and of those sciences which they exclusively possessed, at least prepared a safe asylum for the muses and the arts, who had long trembled at the approach, and at length fled before the fierce aspect of Mahomet II. From that period a new order of things took place in Italy; the construction of language was investigated on philosophical principles; the maxims of sound criticism began to supplant the scholastick subtilties which had perverted for ages the powers of the human mind; and men descended from their fancied eminence among the regions of speculation and hypothesis, to tread the earth with a firm foot, and to gain the temple of fame by a direct, though laborious path. CHAP. VII.

Progress of the Laurentian Library.

The establishment of publick libraries in different parts of Italy, whilst it was one of the first consequences of this striking predilection for the works of the ancients, became in its turn

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turn the active cause of further improvement. To no description of individuals is the world more indebted, than to those who have been instrumental in preserving the wisdom of past ages, for the use of those to come, and thereby giving, as it were, a general sensorium to the human race. In this respect great obligations are due to the venerable Cosmo[g]. From the intercourse that in his time subsisted between Florence and Constantinople, and the long visits made by the Greek prelates and scholars to Italy, he had the best opportunity of obtaining the choicest treasures of ancient learning; and the destruction of Constantinople may be said to have transferred to Italy all that remained of eastern science[h]. After the death of Cosmo, his

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[g] *Bandini, Lettera sopra i principj, &c. della Biblioteca Laurenziana. Fir.* 1773.

[h] The library of S. Marco, which, as we have before related, was founded by Cosmo, with the books collected by Niccolo Niccoli, and augmented at his own expense, was, in the year 1454, almost buried in ruins by an earthquake, that continued at intervals for nearly forty days, during which several persons lost their lives. Cosmo, however, not only restored the building to its former state, but raised the ceiling, so as to admit of a more extensive collection. At the same time a new arrangement of the manuscripts took place, and the Greek and Oriental works were formed into a class distinct from the Latin. *Mehus in vitâ Amb. Trav. p.* 66. 73.

his son Piero pursued with steady perseverance the same object, and made important additions to the various collections which Cosmo had begun, particularly to that of his own family[i]. But although the ancestors of Lorenzo laid the foundation of the immense collection of manuscripts, since denominated the Laurentian Library, he may himself claim the honour of having raised the superstructure. If there was any pursuit in which he engaged more ardently and persevered more diligently than the rest, it was

[i] The manuscripts acquired by Piero de' Medici are for the most part highly ornamented with miniatures, gilding, and other decorations, and are distinguished by the *fleurs de lys*. Those collected by Lorenzo are marked not only with the Medicean arms, but with a laurel branch in allusion to his name, and the motto SEMPER When we advert to the immense prices which were given for these works, and the labour afterwards employed on them, they may be considered as the most expensive articles of luxury. A taste for the exterior decoration of books has lately arisen in this country, in the gratification of which no small share of ingenuity has been displayed; but if we are to judge of the present predilection for learning by the degree of expense thus incurred, we must consider it as greatly inferiour either to that of the Romans during the times of the first emperours, or of the Italians in the fifteenth century. And yet it is perhaps difficult to discover, why a favourite book should not be as proper an object of elegant ornament, as the head of a cane, the hilt of a sword, or the latchet of a shoe.

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was that of enlarging his collection of books and antiquities. "We need not wonder," says Niccolo Leoniceno, writing to Politiano [k], "at "your eloquence and your acquirements, when "we consider the advantages which you derive "from the favour of Lorenzo de' Medici, the "great patron of learning in this age; whose "messengers are dispersed throughout every "part of the earth, for the purpose of collecting "books on every science, and who has spared "no expense in procuring for your use, and "that of others who may devote themselves to "similar studies, the materials necessary for "your purpose. I well remember the glorious "expression of Lorenzo, which you repeated "to me, that he wished the diligence of Pico "and yourself would afford him such oppor-"tunities of purchasing books, that his fortune "proving insufficient, he might pledge even his "furniture to possess them." Acting under the influence of such impressions, we cannot wonder at the progress made by Lorenzo, in which he derived great assistance from Hieronymo Donato, Ermolao Barbaro, and Paolo Cortesi; but his principal coadjutor was Politiano, to whom he committed the care and arrangement of his collection, and who made excursions

[k] *Polit. Epist. lib.* ii. *Ep.* 7.

excursions at intervals through Italy, to discover and purchase such remains of antiquity, as suited the purposes of his patron[l]. Two journies, undertaken at the instance of Lorenzo, into the east, by Giovanni Lascar, produced a great number of rare and valuable works. On his return from his second expedition, he brought with him about two hundred copies, many of which he had procured from a monastery at Mount Athos; but this treasure did not arrive till after the death of Lorenzo, who in his last moments expressed to Politiano and Pico, his regret that he could not live to complete the collection which he was forming for their accommodation[m]. Stimulated by the example of

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[l] Of the vigilance of Politiano in these pursuits, we have the most explicit evidence, in a letter from him to Lorenzo, first published by Fabroni, which may justify the forcible remark of that author on the literary agents of Lorenzo. "Porro ipsos venaticos canes dixisses, ita "odorabantur omnia & pervestigabant, ut ubi quidque "rarum esset, aliqua ratione invenirent atque compa- "rarent."

Fabr. in vitâ Laur. v. i. *p.* 153. *Appx. No.* LI.

[m] Non nihil etiam tunc quoque jocatus nobiscum, quin utrosque intuens nos; Vellem, ait, distulisset me saltem mors hæc ad eum diem quo vestram plane bibliothecam absoluissem. *Pol. Ep. lib.* iv. *Ep.* 2.

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of Lorenzo, other eminent patrons of learning engaged in the same pursuit. Those who particularly distinguished themselves were Mattia Corvino king of Hungary, and Federigo duke of Urbino[n], to both of whom Lorenzo gave permission to copy such of his manuscripts as they wished to possess; nothing being more consonant to his intentions than to diffuse the spirit of literature as extensively as possible.

Introduction of printing in Florence.

The newly discovered art of printing contributed also in an eminent degree, to accelerate the progress of classical literature. This art was practised very early in Florence, and some of the Florentine authors have even been desirous of conferring on one of their countrymen the merit of its invention[o]; but this acute people have too many well-founded claims on the gratitude of posterity, to render it necessary for them to rely on doubtful commendation. It is, however, certain, that whilst Venice solicited the assistance of Nicolas Jensen, a native of France, and Rome began to practise the art under the guidance of the two German printers,

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[n] *Pol. Ep. lib.* iii. *Ep.* 6. *Fabr. in vitâ Laur. v.* i. *p.* 154.

[o] *Manni, della prima promulgazione de' Libri in Firenze. Fir.* 1761.

printers, Sweynheym and Pannartz, Florence found amongst her own citizens an artist equal to the task. Taking for his example the inscriptions on the ancient Roman seals[p], or more probably stimulated by the success of his contemporaries, Bernardo Cennini, a Florentine goldsmith, formed the *matrices* of his letters in steel; by means of which, with the assistance of his two sons, Domenico and Piero, he began in the year 1471 to print the works of Virgil, with the commentary of Servius, which he published at Florence in the following year[q].

Lorenzo

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[p] *Manni, della prima promulgazione de' Libri in Firenze, p.* 3. *Fir.* 1761.

[q] At the close of the Bucolicks in this edition, is th following inscription:

AD LECTOREM
Florentiæ vii. *Idus Novembres*
MCCCCLXXI.

Bernardus Cenninus Aurifex omnium judicio præstantissimus & Dominicus ejus F. egregiæ indolis adolescens: expressis ante calibe caracteribus, ac deinde fusis literis, volumen hoc primum impresserunt. Petrus Cenninus Bernardi ejusdem F. quanta potuit cura & diligentia emendavit, ut cernis. *Florentinis ingeniis nil ardui est.* And at the close of the volume is another inscription, with the date of October 1472.

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Early editions of the classick authors.

Lorenzo de' Medici saw the importance of a discovery, which had been wanting to the completion of the generous views of his ancestors, and availed himself of it with a degree of earnestness which sufficiently shows the motives by which he was actuated. At his instigation, several of the Italian scholars were induced to bestow their attention, in collating and correcting the manuscripts of the ancient authors, in order that they might be submitted to the press with the greatest possible accuracy. In the dialogues of Landino, published by him under the name of *Disputationes Camaldulenses*, to which we have had occasion to refer[r], that author has devoted his third and fourth books to a critical dissertation on the works of Virgil, particularly with a view of explaining such parts as are supposed to contain an allegorical sense; but he soon afterwards performed a much more grateful office to the admirers of the Roman poet, by correcting the errours with which his works abounded, and endeavouring to restore them to their original purity. In the proem to this work, which he has inscribed to Piero de' Medici, the son of Lorenzo, he recapitulates the favours which the ancestors of his patron have

[r] *Vol. i. p.* 140.

have bestowed on men of learning, and particularly recommends to his imitation, in this respect, the example of his father. He adverts to the assassination of Giuliano de' Medici, and attributes the preservation of Lorenzo, at that critical juncture, to his own courage and magnanimity[s]. Returning to his immediate subject, he thus proceeds: "In my dialogues of Camaldoli, I have given a philosophical comment on "the works of Virgil. I now mean to perform "the office of a grammarian and critick on this "author. In my former attempt, as the subject is of more dignity, I have introduced your "father as one of the disputants; but these "observations, which are intended to inculcate a "knowledge of the Latin language, I consider as "more properly addressed to a young man of your "promising talents and cultivated understanding."

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[s] "Dabis, suavissime Petre, hoc in loco roganti mihi "veniam, si barbaricam illam, & omnium sceleratissimam "ac sine exemplo conjurationem silentio præterierim: "qua in templo marmoreo inter sacra solemnia & Julianus "frater sævissime trucidatus, et ipse Laurentius, inter "strictos, et undique eum petentes gladios jam jam "casurus, ita elapsus est, ut non humano, sed divino "auxilio, et sua animi præstantia, quæ audacissimum "quemque terrere poterat, de manu inimicorum ereptus "videatur." *Band. Spec. Lit. Flor. v.* i. *p.* 223.

CHAP. VII. "ingt." In the year 1482, Landino published also an edition of the works of Horace, with numerous corrections and remarks, which he inscribed to Guido da Feltri, the son of Federigo, duke of Urbino[u], to whom he had dedicated, in terms of the highest commendation and respect, his *Disputationes Camaldulenses*. Landino was one of the first scholars who, after the revival of letters, devoted himself to the important task of restoring and elucidating these favourite authors, and his labours were received with unbounded applause. Of his observations on Horace considerable use has been made by many subsequent editors. On their publication, Politiano accompanied them with the following ode, not unworthy of the poet whose praises it is intended to celebrate[v]:

AD

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[t] *Band. Spec. Lit. Flor. v.* i. *p.* 225.

[u] *Impressum per Antonium Miscominum, Florentiæ, anno Salutis* MCCCCLXXXII *nonis Augusti.* These commentaries were republished at Venice, *per Joannem de Forlivio & Socios*, in the following year, and several subsequent editions have taken place.

[v] This ode is not printed in the works of Politiano, and is very inaccurately given by Bandini. *Spec. Lit. Flor.* It is here republished from the edition of Horace by Landino, *Ven.* MCCCCLXXXIII.

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AD HORATIUM FLACCUM.

Vates Threicio blandior Orpheo,
Seu malis fidibus sistere lubricos
Amnes, seu tremulo ducere pollice
Ipsis cum latebris feras;
Vates Aeolii pectinis arbiter,
Qui princeps Latiam sollicitas chelyn,
Nec segnis titulos addere noxiis
Nigro carmine frontibus;
Quis te a barbarica compede vindicat?
Quis frontis nebulam dispulit, et situ
Deterso, levibus restituit choris,
Curata juvenem cute?
O quam nuper eras nubilus, et malo
Obductus senio, quam nitidos ades
Nunc vultus referens, docta fragrantibus
Cinctus tempora floribus!
Talem purpureis reddere solibus
Laetum pube nova post gelidas nives
Serpentem, positis exuviis, solet
Verni temperies poli.
Talem te choreis reddidit et Lyrae
LANDINUS, veterum laudibus æmulus,
Qualis tu solitus Tibur ad uvidum
Blandam tendere barbiton.
Nunc te deliciis, nunc decet et levi
Lascivire joco, nunc puerilibus
Insertum thyasis, aut fide garrula,
Inter ludere virgines.

Poet,

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Poet, than whom the bard of Thrace
Ne'er knew to touch a sweeter string;
O whether from their deep recess
The tenants of the wilds thou bring,
With all their shades; whether thy strain
Bid listening rivers cease to flow;
Whether with magick verse thou stain
A lasting blot on vice's brow;
Poet! who first the Latian lyre
To sweet Eolian numbers strung!
When late repressed thy native fire,
When late impervious glooms o'erhung
Thy front; O say, what hand divine
Thy rude barbarick chains unbound,
And bade thee in new lustre shine,
Thy locks with vernal roses crown'd?
As when in spring's reviving gleam
The serpent quits his scaly slough,
Once more beneath the sunny beam,
In renovated youth to glow;
To thy lov'd lyre, and choral throng,
LANDINO thus their poet brings;
Such as thy TIBUR heard thy song,
Midst her cool shades and gushing springs.
Again with tales of whispered love,
With sprightly wit of happiest vein,
Through bands of vine-crown'd youths to rove,
Or sport amidst the virgin train.

It is greatly to the credit of Politiano that these verses were addressed to the person who was his most formidable rival in those studies to which he had

had particularly devoted his talents. In restoring to their original purity the ancient authors, he was himself indefatigable; and if to the munificence of Lorenzo de' Medici we are to attribute the preservation of many of these works, Politiano is perhaps entitled to our equal acknowledgments for his elucidations and corrections of the text, which, from a variety of causes, was frequently unintelligible, illegible, or corrupt. In the exercise of his critical talents, he did not confine himself to any precise method, but adopted such as he conceived best suited his purpose; on some occasions only comparing different copies, diligently marking the variations, rejecting spurious readings, and substituting the true. In other cases he proceeded further, and added Scholia and notes illustrative of the text, either from his own conjectures, or the authority of other authors [w]. Besides the advantages

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[w] In the edition of Cato, Varro, and Columella, published at Paris, *ex off. Rob. Stephani*, 1543, with the corrections of Pet. Victorius, that excellent critick thus adverts to the labours of Politiano: "Non exemplar "ipsum semper consului, sed habui excusos formis "libros, quos cum antiquis illis *Angelus Politianus* studiose "olim contulerat, eosque, quantum mihi commodum "fuit, pertractavi; illi enim quoque publici sunt. "Eruditissimi igitur viri labor, magno me labore levavit; "qui

CHAP. VII. advantages which he derived from various copies of the same work, which enabled him to collate them so as to ascertain the true reading, he obtained great assistance from the collection of antiques formed by Lorenzo and his ancestors; and amongst his coins, inscriptions on marble, and other authentick documents, frequently elucidated and determined what might otherwise have remained in darkness or in doubt[x]. At the close of his remarks on Catullus, a memorial appears in his own hand-writing, in which he indulges himself in an exultation of youthful vanity, in the idea of having surpassed all his contemporaries in the diligence which he has shown in correcting the ancient authors. This memorial, which bears the date of 1473, at which time he was only eighteen years of age, is

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" qui quidem, ut erat diligens, & accuratus, hac librorum " collatione mirifice delectabatur: & ita posse bonos " auctores multis maculis purgari, vere existimabat. " Quæcumque igitur in priscis exemplaribus inveniebat, " in impressis sedulo adnotabat. Quod si diutius ille " vixisset, & quæ mente destinaverat perficere potuisset, " opera sedulitasque ipsius magnos studiosis litterarum " fructus attulisset, multosque qui postea huic muneri " corrigendorum librorum necessario incubuerunt, magna " prorsus molestia liberasset."

[x] *Menck. in vitâ Pol. p.* 237.

is subscribed *Angelus Bassus Politianus*. Before, however, we accuse our youthful critick of an ostentatious display of learning, or an improper confidence in his own abilities, we ought to advert to another entry made two years afterwards at the close of the works of Propertius in the same volume, by which he confesses, that many of his previous observations do not approve themselves to his riper judgment, and requests the reader not to form an opinion of his talents, his learning, or his industry, from such a specimen: there being many things, says he, CHAP. VII.

Me quoque, qui scripsi, judice, digna lini.

Which I, their author, well might wish to blot[y].

In this subsequent entry he denominates himself *Angelus Politianus*, which sufficiently marks the period when he chose to discontinue the appellation of *Bassus*[z]; but, what is of more importance, it serves to convince us, that with the

[y] The reader may consult these memoranda in the Appendix, No. LII.

[z] On this point, which has been so much contested, I find the opinion of Bandini, before cited in this work, v. i. *p.* 189, is confirmed by that of Laur. Mehus *Vita, Amb. Traversarii, p.* 87.

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the errours of his judgment Politiano corrected also those of his temper, and that his proficiency in learning was accompanied by an equal improvement in modesty and candour. Among the ancient authors which he has thus illustrated,[a] are Ovid[b], Suetonius[b], Statius[c], the younger Pliny[d], the Scriptores Historiæ Augustæ[e], and Quintilian[f]; some of which have been published with his emendations, while his valuable remarks on others are yet confined to the limits of the Italian libraries. The example of Politiano was followed by many other celebrated scholars, who regarded Lorenzo de' Medici as the patron of their studies, and inscribed their labours with his name. Thus Domitio Calderino undertook to regulate the text of Martial[g], Bartolommeo Fontio

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[a] In the Bibliotheca Marciana.

[b] In the Laurentian Library. *Plut.* LXIV. *cod.* 1.

[c] In the Corsini Library at Rome.

[d] In the Laurentian Library. *Plut.* LXVII. *cod.* 7.

[e] Ib. *Plut.* XLIV. *cod.* 1.

[f] Ib. *Plut.* XLVI. *cod.* 5.

[g] Printed at Rome per Joannem Gensberg, 1474. *v. De Bure, No.* 2818.

Fontio employed his talents on Persius[h], and Lancelotto on Columella[i]. Nor were the Greek authors neglected. In the year 1488, Demetrius Chalcondyles and Demetrius Cretensis published at Florence the first edition of the works of Homer, which is inscribed to Piero de' Medici, the son of Lorenzo[k]. CHAP. VII.

Politiano corrects the pandects of Justinian.

The system of jurisprudence which in the fifteenth century prevailed throughout the greatest part of Europe, was that of the Roman or civil law, which was principally founded on the pandects or constitutions of Justinian. Hence the correction and explication of the subsisting copies of this work became of high importance to

[h] Published in 1481. *Band. Cat. Bibl. Laur. v.* ii. *fl.* 679.

[i] *Band. Cat. v.* ii. *fl.* 564. In the preface to this author, the editor thus addresses Lorenzo: "Ab ineunte "etenim ætate, splendidissima nominis tui fama, ad tuam "benevolentiam captandam ita me compulit, ut cunctis "potius honoris tui studiosum ostendere hoc ævo malim, "quam in decorem meum reticere."

[k] Florentiæ imp. *Typis Bernardi & Nerii Tanaidis Nerlii Florentinorum. Nono mensis Decembris Anno* 1488. 2 vol. fo. For an account of this magnificent work, *v. Maittaire, Annales typograph. vol.* i. *par.* 1. *fl.* 49. *De Bure, No.* 2493.

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to the community. This task was reserved for the indefatigable industry of Politiano, whose labours in this department entitle him to rank not only with the earliest, but with the most learned modern professors of this science. In his letters he has himself given some account of his progress in this laborious work. Much additional information may be found in the narrative of his life by Menckenius; and Bandini, who has lately had the good fortune to recover the commentary of Politiano, and restore it to its former station in the Laurentian Library, has published an historical narrative expressly on this subject[l]. In the accomplishment of this task, which he was induced to undertake at the instance of Lorenzo de' Medici, Politiano had singular advantages. An ancient and authentick copy found at Pisa, and supposed to have been deposited there by the orders of Justinian himself, had, on the capture of that place, been transferred to Florence[m], and was afterwards intrusted by

[l] *Raggionamento Istorico sopra le collazioni delle Fiorentine Pandette, fatta da Angelo Poliziano, sotto gli auspicij del Mag. Lorenzo de' Medici, &c. Livorno* 1762.

[m] "Principio igitur scire te illud opinor, Imperatorem Justinianum posteaquam jus civile perpurgavit, in ordinemque redegit, cavisse illud in primis, ut in omnibus civitatibus quæ dignitate aliqua præcellerant, exemplaria

by Lorenzo de' Medici to the sole custody of Politiano[n]. By this he was enabled to correct the numerous errours, and to supply the defects of the more recent manuscripts, as well as of two editions which had before issued from the press[o]. The civilians of the ensuing century have

" exemplaria legum quam emendatissima publice asser-
" varentur—sed nullum ex his clarius tamen aut cele-
" bratius, quam quod ad usque urbis ejus captivitatem,
" Pisis, magna religione sit custoditum."

Pol. Ep. lib. 10.

[n] " Hoc ergo mihi inspicere per otium licuit, rima-
" rique omnia, & olfacere, quæque vellem excerpere
" diligenter, & cum vulgatis exemplaribus comparare.
" Tribuit enim hoc mihi uni *Laurentius ille Medices*, vir
" optimus ac sapientissimus; fore illud aliquando arbi-
" tratus, ut opera labore industriaque nostra, magna
" inde omnino utilitas eliceretur." *Ib.*

[o] Mr. Gibbon gives Politiano the appellation of an enthusiast, for supposing this manuscript to be " the " authentick standard of Justinian himself."—" This " paradox," says he, " is refuted by the abbreviations of " the Florentine manuscript, and the Latin characters " betray the hand of a Greek scribe." *Hist. of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, book* 44. Politiano had, however, paid attention to this circumstance, and was of opinion that it was copied by a Latin scribe, and not by a Greek. " Est enim," says he, in an epistle to Lod. Bolognese, *lib.* xi. " liber characteribus majusculis,
" sine ullis compendiariis notis; nec *Græcus*, sed *Latinus*
" —videlicet ille ipse quem inter ceteros publicavit
" Justinianus."

CHAP. VII. have freely confessed their obligations to a commentator who first, with the true spirit of research,

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"Justinianus." But although Politiano appears to have given the subject a cool and critical examination, and is therefore not to be stigmatized as *an enthusiast*, yet there is reason to believe that the judgment he formed as to the Florentine pandects was erroneous. To the researches and the kindness of the reverend and very learned Dr. Parr, who has examined this question with particular attention, I am indebted for the observations of many eminent scholars, bearing directly or indirectly on this subject; from the result of which it may fairly be presumed, that the Florentine MS. is in fact the work of a Greek scribe, although it by no means follows, as Dr. Parr has himself justly observed, that the copy is not one of those which "inter ceteros publicavit Justi-"nianus." This decision is principally supported by two circumstances. 1. The mode of pointing or stopping observable in the MS. which in many instances is that of the Greek, and not of the Latin scribes. On this head the most decisive authority is that of Trotz, an acute and learned annotator on the work of Hermannus Hugo, a jesuit, *de primâ scribendi origine*, who, after a very minute inquiry into the methods of pointing adopted by the ancients, and an actual examination of the Florentine pandects, expressly says, "Unde fallitur Ang. Politianus "(quem miror non notasse Brenckmannum) *c.* 41. *Miscell.* "plane nullis intervallis dictionum archetypum esse con-"scriptum asserens," &c. 2. The letters *b* and *v* were often used indifferently for each other by the Greek copyists in transcribing Latin authors, and this peculiarity is also observable in the Florentine pandects. In the

research, applied himself to the elucidation of a science in itself sufficiently complex and obscure, but CHAP. VII.

the "*Animadversiones*" of Alexander Cunningham, on Bentley's Horace, *cap.* ii. *p.* 157. is the following passage: "Neque vero me fallit Græcos librarios, qui *b*, et *v*, eodem "sono efferebant, *b* loco *v*, et vicissim *v* loco *b*, in latinis "libris describendis, crebrò posuisse. Quibus vitiis Floren- "tinus Pandectarum codex, nec-non Glossarium Latino- "Græcum et Græco-Latinum, Tuarellio et H. Stephano "testibus, miserè laborant," &c. Now Cunningham, as Dr. Parr observes, had not only great erudition, but had a clear head, and was by far the ablest antagonist that ever attacked Bentley upon this boasted edition of Horace. Cunningham discovered at once the most obvious as well as the most probable reason, which had, however, escaped the penetration of Salmasius, Stephens, (who, though he had noted the circumstance, did not advert to its being occasioned by a Greek scribe,) and the editor of Labbè. He marks the peculiarity of the change in the Florentine MS. and imputes it, very properly, to the Greek scribe who was employed upon it. Such in part are the documents upon which the opinion of Dr. Parr is founded, which he has also supported by many other collateral proofs, to which it seems impossible, notwithstanding the authority of Politiano, to refuse assent.

This work, which consists of two volumes, written on thin vellum, "was deposited," says Mr. Gibbon, on the authority of Brenckman, "as a sacred relick in a "rich casket, in the ancient palace of the republick, new "bound in purple, and shewn to curious travellers by "the monks and magistrates, bare-headed and with "lighted

CHAP. VII. but which was rendered still more so, by the imperfect state of those authorities to which its professors were constantly obliged to refer.

Miscellanea of Politiano.

Of the critical talents of Politiano, and of the variety and extent of his erudition, his *Miscellanea* alone afford a sufficient testimony[q]. For the publication of this work, which consists principally

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"lighted tapers." Since the first publication of this work I have been admonished by a learned Italian, that in relying on the authority of Mr. Gibbon for the above circumstances, I have suffered myself to be misled. That such ceremonies formally took place rests, however, upon undoubted authority. "Atqui volumen ipsum— "in ipsa Curia Florentina, a summo magistratu publice "adservatur, magnaque veneratione quamquam raro "id, etiamque ad funalia ostenditur." *Polit. Miscel. cap.* xli. That this custom was continued to the present day, I neither supposed myself, nor intended to induce others to believe.

[q] First printed by Antonio Miscomini at Florence with the following singular colophon: *Impressit ex archetypo Antonius Miscominus. Familiares quidam Politiani recognovere. Politianus ipse nec Horthographiam se ait, nec omnino alienam præstare culpam.* FLORENTIÆ ANNO SALUTIS M.CCCC.LXXXIX. *Decimo tertio kalendas Octobris.* In 4°. This book, like all those I have seen of the same printer, is most elegantly and correctly executed, and is a proof of the speedy proficiency made in typography at Florence.

principally of observations on the writings of the ancient authors, we are also indebted to Lorenzo de' Medici, to whom Politiano was accustomed, as they rode out on horseback, to repeat the various remarks which had occurred to him in his morning studies[r]. At the request of Lorenzo, he was at length induced to commit them to paper, and to arrange them in order for the press. On their publication he inscribed them to his great friend and benefactor; not, as he assures him, merely for the purpose of testifying his gratitude for the assistance and advice which he had, in the course of his work, received from him, but that it might obtain favour, and derive authority, from the celebrity of his name[s].

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The

[r] *Pol. in præf. ad Miscel.*

[s] Nec erunt opinor hæc quoque nostra, quamquam levioris operis studia, seu ludicra verius, dedecori tibi Laurenti Medices, cui nunc adscribuntur. Adscribuntur autem non magis adeo ut me gratum beneficiis tuis approbent, aut reponant gratiam, quod auxiliarium te, quodque consiliarium habuerunt, quam ut auspicato procedant, et ut in iis tui memoria frequentetur, ex quo liber auctoritatem capiens magni celebritate nominis commendetur. *Pol. in præf. ad Miscell.*

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His controversy with Merula.

The publication of this work soon afterwards led Politiano into a controversy, in which he conducted himself with firmness and moderation, and which terminated greatly to his honour. Lodovico Sforza, anxious to throw a veil over the guilt of his usurpation by an attention to the promotion of letters, had prevailed upon Giorgio Merula, among other learned men, to establish his residence at Milan, where he enjoyed an ample pension from the duke. The character of Merula stood high for his acquirements in Latin literature[t]; but neither his proficiency in learning, nor

[t] To Merula we are indebted for the first edition of the comedies of Plautus, printed at Venice, *per Johannem de Colonia & Vindelinum de Spira*, 1472. He also corrected and commented on the works of Juvenal, of Martial, of Quintilian, of Ausonius, the *Scriptores de re rustica*, and other ancient authors; several of which have been published with his remarks. Merula was the disciple of Filelfo, and like him was frequently engaged in those acrimonious contests which perhaps promoted, whilst they disgraced, the cause of literature. One of these debates was with Galeotto Marzio, who, about the year 1468, wrote his treatise *De homine*, in the first book of which he describes the exterior, and, in the second, the interiour parts of man. This work Merula attacked with great bitterness, and with a considerable display of critical

nor his intercourse with the great, nor even his advanced age, had softened or improved a disposition naturally jealous and austere. He had, however, singled out Politiano as the only person among the scholars of Italy, who, in his opinion, possessed any share of merit, and upon an interview which they had together at Milan, had acknowledged, that the restoration of the language of the ancient Romans depended upon his exertions[u]. No sooner, however, did the

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critical sagacity. The commentary of Merula was printed without date or place, and inscribed to Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici; but as the author in his dedication refers to the establishment of the academy at Pisa as a recent transaction, it was probably published about the year 1472. From this edition I shall give the dedication, as a striking memorial of the early reputation which these illustrious brothers had acquired as patrons of learning. (*v. Appn. No.* LIII.) In the copy before me, the critique on Galeotto is followed by a comment on an epistle of Sappho, inscribed to M. Ant. Maurocenus, and by some observations on Virgil addressed to Lodovico Gonzago, prince of Mantua. Some account of the life and labours of Merula may be found in *Tirab. Storia della Lett. Ital. v.* vi. *part* 1. *p.* 291. *Zeno Diss. Voss. vol.* ii. *p.* 83.

[u] Meministi credo, quod in frequenti auditorio Venetiis, cum ad me accessisses, palam dixerim, te illum esse, quem priscæ et Romanæ doctrinæ instauratorem mihi pollicerer. *Mer. Ep. int. Ep. Pol. lib.* xi. *Ep.* 5.

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the *Miscellanea* of Politiano make their appearance, than Merula availed himself of an opportunity of demonstrating his own superiority by depreciating the labours of his rival; asserting that such of the remarks of Politiano as were entitled to commendation, might be found in the critical works which he had himself previously published, or were in the memory of his pupils who had attended his publick instructions[v]. He even insinuated that he had collected no inconsiderable number of gross errours, which he might probably make publick on some future occasion. Politiano was soon apprized of this injurious treatment; and as he was not slow at resenting an indignity, it is probable that Merula would have experienced the weight of his resentment, had not other considerations interposed. Merula stood high in the opinion of his patron, whilst Politiano was known to live on terms of the closest intimacy with Lorenzo de' Medici. An open attack might therefore have involved the name of Lorenzo, whose connexions with Lodovico were of too much importance to be endangered in a literary contest. Thus circumstanced, Politiano adopted a more discreet and serious method of bringing on a discussion. He addressed

[v] *Merulæ Ep. inter Ep. Pol. lib.* xi. *Ep.* 5.

addressed a letter to the duke, entreating that he would exert his authority with Merula, to induce him to publish his criticisms; at the same time transmitting for his perusal a letter to Merula of similar import[w]. Merula however refused either to retract the opinions which he had avowed, or to communicate to Politiano his remarks. In answer to a sarcasm, which Politiano might well have spared, he replies, "You "reproach me with my grey locks—I feel not "their effects. I yet possess vigour of mind "and strength of body; celerity of thought "and tenacity of memory; of these let Poli- "tiano beware[x]." Several letters on this subject appear in the epistles of Politiano, and the contest was rising to an extreme of violence, when Merula suddenly died. This event gave Politiano real concern, not only on account of the loss of a man, of whose talents he entertained a high opinion, but as tending to deprive him still more effectually of the opportunity of defending his work[y]. Anxious, however, that nothing might be omitted which was necessary to the vindication of his character, he again addressed

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[w] *Pol. Epist. lib.* xi. *Ep.* 1, 2.

[x] *Merulæ Ep. inter Ep. Pol. lib.* xi. *Ep.* 6.

[y] *Pol. Epist. lib.* xi. *Ep.* 11.

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addressed himself to the duke, with earnest entreaties to transmit to him the criticisms of Merula; but to no purpose. This formidable composition, if indeed it ever existed, was reduced to a few loose and unimportant observations. The letters of Lodovico, which are remarkable for their kindness and attention to Politiano, seem however at length to have satisfied his restless apprehensions. "You can "have no reason, Angelo," says the duke, "to fear any injury to your reputation from "the suppression of the remarks of Merula, as "this cannot be attributed to you, who, so "far from wishing to conceal them, have "used your utmost endeavours with us to lay "them before the publick; of which the present "letter may serve as a testimony[x]."

Establishment of the Greek academy at Florence.

The institution of publick seminaries for promoting the knowledge of the ancient languages, the respect paid to those who undertook the task of instruction, and the ample compensation they derived, not only from the liberality of individuals, but from the publick at large, powerfully cooperated with the causes before mentioned in diffusing a just taste for classical literature. Of the

[x] *Pol. Epist. lib.* xi. *Ep.* 21.

the establishment of the academy at Pisa, by the exertions of Lorenzo de' Medici, a brief account has before been given[a]; but his attention to the cause of learning was by no means confined to this institution. The studies at Pisa were chiefly restricted to the Latin language, or to those sciences of which it was the principal vehicle; but it was at Florence only that the Greek tongue was inculcated under the sanction of a publick institution, either by native Greeks, or learned Italians who were their powerful competitors, whose services were procured by the diligence of Lorenzo de' Medici, and repaid by his bounty[b]. Hence succeeding scholars have been

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[a] *Vol.* I. *p.* 203.

[b] Ille animadvertens jam tum litteras circa exitum laborare, Pisis Scholas litterarum Latinarum, Florentiæ Græcarum instituit; viros doctissimos aere suo ac magno undecumque accersiit, studiosos et fovit, et juvit, nec prius in hoc elaborare destitit, quam ita restitueret, ut non facile iterum ad id precipitium pervenire possent.

Caii Silvani Germanici Ep. ad Leonem X. *v. Band. Cat. v.* ii. *p.* 117.

Florentiam quoque et Latinis et Græcis litteris clarissime insignivit, exquisitis atque ingentibus etiam præmiis allectis utriusque facultatis viris omnium judicio peritissimis.

Raph. Brandolini Ep. ad Leonem X. *v. Band. v.* ii. *p.* 371. *Plut.* xlvi. *Cod.* 2.

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been profuse of their acknowledgments to their great patron, who first formed that establishment, from which (to use their own classical figure), as from the Trojan horse, so many illustrious champions have sprung, and by means of which the knowledge of the Greek tongue was extended, not only through all Italy, but through France, Spain, Germany, and England; from all which countries numerous pupils attended at Florence, who diffused the learning they had there acquired throughout the rest of Europe[c].

Johannes Argyropylus.

Of this institution the first publick professor was the eminent Johannes Argyropylus, who, after having enjoyed for several years the favour and protection of Cosmo and Piero de' Medici, and having had a principal share in the education

[c] Quo sane tempore Florentiæ, veluti in celeberrimo totius orbis theatro, eruditissimi viri, tanquam ex equo Trojano innumerabiles proceres, sese in orbem terrarum effuderunt. Quamobrem non modo Italia, sed etiam Gallia, Hispania, Germania, et Britannia hujusmodi beneficium Medicum familiæ acceptum referunt. *Petri Angelii Epist. ap. Band. Cat.* ii. 397. Alluding to a well known and much admired passage in the second book of *Cicero de Oratore*: "Ecce tibi exortus est Isocrates, "magister istorum omnium, cujus e ludo, tanquam ex "equo Trojano, meri principes exierunt."

tion of Lorenzo, was selected by him as the person best qualified to give instructions on the Greek tongue. Of the disciples of Argyropylus, Politiano, if not the most diligent, was the most successful. With the precepts which he imbibed, he acquired a predilection for the source from whence they flowed; and his writings discover numerous instances of his affection and veneration for the man who first opened to him the treasures of Grecian literature. To the unlimited applause bestowed by the scholar on the master, one exception only occurs. Argyropylus had professed an open hostility to the reputation of Cicero, whom he represented as a sciolist in the Greek tongue, and as unacquainted with the tenets of the different sects of philosophy, to which so many of his writings relate. The acuteness of Argyropylus, and the influence of his authority, degraded in the estimation of his pupils the character of the Roman orator; and Politiano, in his riper years, seems to shudder at the recollection of the time when the ignorance of Tully was a matter taken for granted by him and his fellow-students[d]. During the long residence

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[d] Et ut homo erat omnium (ut tum quidem videbatur) acerrimus in disputando, atque aurem (quod ait Persius)

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residence of Argyropylus in Italy, he had acquired an extensive knowledge of the Latin language—a species of praise to which few of his countrymen are entitled. His translations into Latin of various tracts of Aristotle, are, for the most part, inscribed to his successive patrons of the family of the Medici, in language expressive of his respect and gratitude[e]. Among his auditors we find Donato Acciajuoli, Janus Pannonius, and the German prelate Johannes Reuchlinus, who having had the singular good fortune to obtain some previous knowledge of the Greek tongue, displayed, it is said, on his first interview with Argyropylus, such an acquaintance with it, as induced the Greek to exclaim with a sigh, "*Alas, Greece is already "banished beyond the Alps*[f]."

To

Persius) mordaci lotus aceto, præterea verborum quoque nostrorum funditator maximus, facile id vel nobis vel cæteris, tum quidem suis sectatoribus persuaserat: ita ut, (quod pene dictu quoque nefas) pro concesso inter nos haberetur, nec philosophiam scisse M. Tullium, nec litteras Græcas. *Pol. in Miscel. cap.* 1.

[e] *Band. Cat. Bibl. Laur. v.* iii. *p.* 3, 4, 234, 242, 359, *&c.*

[f] *Hodius de Græc. illust. p.* 201. This expression strongly resembles the words of Molo, the celebrated rhetorician

To the industry of Argyropylus, and the excellence of his precepts, his disciple Acciajuoli has born ample testimony; affirming, that whilst he inculcated his doctrines, the times of the ancient philosophers seemed to be again renewed[g]. If, however, we may give credit to the testimony of Paulus Jovius, the precepts and the practice of Argyropylus were not entirely consistent with each other; and the obesity of his figure, which was supported by an immoderate supply of food and wine, seemed to mark him out as belonging to a different sect of philosophers. CHAP. VII.

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rhetorician of Rhodes. He did not understand Latin; and whilst Cicero was declaiming in Greek before him, Molo for a time listened in silence, and at last exclaimed, "*As for you, Cicero, I praise and admire you, but pity the "fortune of Greece, to see arts and sciences, the only orna- "ments which were left to her, transplanted by you to Rome.*" From *Middleton's Life of Cicero*, 8vo. edit. *vol.* i. *p.* 47. Communicated by Dr. Parr.

[g] Cum post interitum quorundam doctissimorum hominum, studia Florentina magna ex parte remissa viderentur, venit in hanc urbem Argyropylus Byzantius, vir ingenio præstans summusque philosophus, ut juventutem litteris græcis ac bonis artibus erudiret: jamque plures annos doctrinam tradidit nobis tanta copia, tam multiplicibus variisque sermonibus, ut visus sit temporibus nostris veterum philosophorum memoriam renovare.

Acciaiol. ap. Hod. de Græcis, 202.

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philosophers[h]. But the bishop of Nocera had too many passions to gratify, to permit him to perform the part of a faithful historian, and there are few of his characters that are not discoloured or distorted by the medium through which they are seen. The same author attributes the death of Argyropylus to the intemperate use of melons, which brought on an autumnal fever, which put a period to his life in the seventieth year of his age. This event took place at Rome, where he had fixed his residence some time previous to the year 1471[i].

Demetrius Chalcondyles.

After an interval of a few years, during which there is reason to believe that the office of publick Greek professor at Florence was filled by Theodorus Gaza, and not by Politiano, as asserted by Jovius, the loss of Argyropylus was supplied by Demetrius Chalcondyles, who was invited

[h] Vini et cibi æque avidus et capax, et multo abdomine ventricosus, immodico melopeponum esu autumnalem accersivit febrem, atque ita septuagesimo ætatis anno ereptus est. *Jovii Elog.* xxvii.

[i] *Hodius de Græc. illust. fl.* 198. where the author has given a translation of the Greek epigram of Politiano, expressing his earnest wishes for the return of Argyropylus to Florence.

invited by Lorenzo de' Medici to take upon himself that employment about the year 1479[k]. It is generally understood that an enmity subsisted between Politiano and Chalcondyles, in consequence of which the latter was eventually under the necessity of quitting Florence, whence he retired to Milan; but for this opinion the only authority is that of Jovius, and of those who have implicitly confided in his relation[l]. This

[k] Demetrius Chalcondyles, diligens grammaticus, et supra græcorum mores, cum nihil in eo fallaciarum aut fuci notaretur, vir utique lenis et probus, scholam Florentiæ instauravit, desertam ab Argyropylo, et a Politiano, deficientibus græcis occupatam. *Jov. Elog.* xxix. This information, if not refuted, is rendered highly problematical by the Greek epigram written by Politiano to Chalcondyles, on his arrival at Florence, in which he considers him as the successour of Gaza, and as supplying the maternal office of nourishing the unfledged offspring of literature, deserted by their former parent. A mode of expression not likely to be used by Politiano to a man who was to supersede him in his office of publick instructer. A translation of this epigram is given by Hody, *p.* 211.

[l] Boissard, Baillet, Varillas, &c. The dissensions between Politiano and Chalcondyles have also engaged much of the attention of Menckenius, *Ang. Pol. vita, p.* 65. and of Bayle, *Dict. Hist. Art. Politien*, who have doubted of the veracity of the narrative of Jovius, without adducing that evidence of its improbability which a more minute examination would have supplied.

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This author, always hostile to the character of Politiano, would induce us to believe, that the Italian scholar, actuated by his jealousy of the Greek, and availing himself of his superiour wit and eloquence, endeavoured to injure Chalcondyles by drawing off his pupils, and engaging them in his own auditory; and that Lorenzo de' Medici, as well in order to remove the causes of their contention, as to avail himself of their mutual emulation, divided between them the task of educating his children. It may however be observed, that no traces of this dissension are to be found in the narrative of any contemporary author; and although the known irascibility of Politiano, and his acknowledged animosity to the Greeks, may seem to strengthen the credit of Jovius, yet it will appear, on further consideration, that these very circumstances, tend greatly to invalidate his testimony. The antipathies of Politiano were never concealed; and his letters, which extend nearly to the time of his death, contain many instances of that vehemence with which he attacked all those who he conceived had given him just cause of offence; but of any dissensions with Chalcondyles, no memorial is to be found. On the contrary, Chalcondyles is frequently noticed, both by the Italian scholar and his correspondents, as living with him in habits

habits of intimacy[m]. The rest of the information derived from Jovius is equally futile. The uninterrupted affection that subsisted between Lorenzo and Politiano would have prevented the former from adopting a measure which the latter could only have considered as an impeachment of his talents; but independent of inferences drawn from this source, we have positive evidence, that however the children of Lorenzo might attend the incidental instructions of others, Politiano had the constant superintendence of their education, and was addressed, on all occasions as the sole person honoured with that important trust[n].

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From

[m] In the year 1491, being only the year previous to the death of Lorenzo de' Medici, Pomponius Lætus writes to Politiano, "Commenda me Medicibus patri et liberis "literarum patronis. Deinde plurima salute Deme-"trium impertias." To which Politiano replies, "Me-"dices nostri unice tibi favent. Demetrius autem "salutem sibi à te dictam totidem verbis remuneratur. "In Fesulano sexto idus Augusti. MCCCCXCI."

Pol. Ep. lib. i. *Ep.* 17, 18.

[n] Thus Lod. Odaxius ad Pol.: "Demetrium vero "virum eruditissimum, Petrumque in primis *discipulum* "*tuum*, elegantissimæ atque amplissimæ spei adoles-"centem, nomine meo salvos facito."

Pol. Ep. lib. iii. *Ep.* 3.

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English scholars at Florence.

From the Florentine institution, it is not difficult to discover the progress of Grecian literature to the rest of Europe; but the traces of the channels by which it was conveyed are in no instance more conspicuous than in those which communicated with this country. William Grocin[o], who was for some years professor of Greek literature in the university of Oxford, had made a journey to Italy, and had resided for the space of two years, at Florence, where he attended the instructions of Chalcondyles and of Politiano. Thomas Linacer[p], whose name deservedly holds the first rank among the early English scholars, availed himself of a similar opportunity; and, during his abode at Florence, was so eminently distinguished by the elegance of his manners and his singular modesty, that he is said to have been selected by Lorenzo

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[o] Nam et Grocinum memini, virum, ut scis, multifaria doctrina, magno quoque et exercitato ingenio, his ipsis litteris duos continuos annos, etiam post prima illa rudimenta, solidam operam dedisse; idque sub summis doctoribus Demetrio Chalcondyla et Angelo Politiano.

Guil. Latimer. in Ep. ad Erasm. ap. Menck. in vitâ Polit.

[p] Linacrum item acri ingenio virum totidem aut etiam plures annos sub iisdem præceptoribus impendisse.

Ibid.

Lorenzo de' Medici as the associate of his children in their studies[q].

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Such

[q] *Jovii. Elog.* lxiii. This circumstance is also particularly adverted to in the following very elegant and apposite passage from a Harveian oration of the celebrated Dr. Akenside, communicated to me by Dr. Parr:

"——Italiam vero, quo tempore *Linacrus* invisit, "regionem illam totam et principum aulas, et liberarum "concilia illa civitatum, una fere voluntas, unum doc- "trinæ studium tenebat. Præcipue tamen eminebat "Florentinorum fama; quorum Respublica, plerumque "alias turbulentissima, tunc forte in *Laurenti Medicis* "ductu, ac prope clientela, feliciter acquievit. Qui cum "per universum nomen Italicum pacis concordiæque "auctor, et bonus, et sapiens, et felix audiret; tum "porro ad ista beneficia patriæ suæ data, nimium, heu! "caduca, et cum ipso brevi moritura, alteri illa pari sane "cura, sed melioribus auspiciis adjunxit, et literis ac "disciplinis restitutis oriunda; nullo unquam tempore "moritura; per omnes terrarum gentes pertinentia; "quorum hodie in hoc ipso loco, forte vacuus et expers "adest. Huic se viro tantopere commendavit indole "sua et modestia Linacrus, ut condiscipulum eum et "amicum filiis suis adderet; quorum ætate medius "Johannes Medices, postea Leonis X. appellatione, "pontifex Romanus, ad istam, qua omnium aures "quotidie personant eruditæ magnificentiæ laudem per- "venit. In illo contubernio quantum profecerit Lina- "crus, quanto cum ardore et quanto fructu Christo- "phorum Landinum, Demetrium Chalcondylum, Ange- "lum

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Political impo. tance obtained by men of learning.

Such were the causes that in the fifteenth century concurred to promote the study of the ancient languages in Italy; but one circumstance yet remains to be noticed, which was perhaps more efficacious than any other in giving life and energy to these pursuits. An acquaintance with the learned languages was, at this period, the most direct path, not only to riches and literary fame, but to political eminence; and the most accomplished scholars were, in almost every government of Italy, the first ministers of the time. This arose, in a great degree, from the very general use of the Latin tongue in the negotiations of different states, which rendered it almost impossible for any person to undertake the management of publick affairs, without an habitual acquaintance with that language; but this was more particularly exemplified in Florence, where the most permanent officers were uniformly selected on account of their learning. During a long course of years the place of secretary, or chancellor of the republick, (for these terms seem to have been indiscriminately used,) was filled by scholars

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" lum Politianum, Marsilium Ficinum, Johannem " Picum audierit et frequentarit, facilius intelligi potest " quam verbis significari."

scholars of the first distinction. In the beginning of the fifteenth century, it was held by Coluccio Salutati, who had been the intimate friend of Petrarca and of Boccaccio, and is denominated by Poggio, "*The common father* "*and instructer of all the learned*[r]." He was succeeded by Leonardo Aretino, whose services to the republick were repaid by many privileges and favours conferred on himself and his descendants[s]. After the death of Leonardo, this office was given to Carlo Marsuppini[t], and was afterwards successively held by Poggio Bracciolini[u], and Benedetto Accolti[v]. During a great part of the time that the affairs of Florence were directed by Lorenzo de' Medici, the chancellor of the republick was Bartolomeo Scala, whose life affords the best example of the honours and emoluments which were derived from the cultivation of literature. Scala deduced his origin from parents of the lowest rank; nor did he

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Florentine secretaries.

[r] *v. ante, p.* 76. Salutati died about the year 1410.

[s] *v. ante, v.* I. *p.* 29.

[t] *Ibid.*

[u] *Ibid p.* 35.

[v] *Ibid. p.* 124.

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he possess from his birth even the privileges of a Florentine citizen[w]. An early proficiency in letters, recommended him to the notice of Cosmo de' Medici; and it was the pride of Scala to avow the meanness of his birth, and the obligations which he owed to his earliest patron[x]. The loss of Cosmo was amply compensated to Scala by the favour of his descendants, through whose assistance he gradually rose to honours and to affluence, and in the year 1472 was intrusted with the seal of the republick. In imitation of his predecessors in this office, Scala began a history of Florence, of which he

Bartolomeo Scala.

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[w] E lo Scala, figliuol d' un mulinaro,
Ovver d' un tessitor di panni lini,
Che colle sue virtù si fece chiaro,
E fu Gonfalonier de' Fiorentini,
Cavalier a Spron d' oro, e non avaro,
Tanto è, voi m' intendete cittadini,
Non s' ha questi a chiamar nobile e degno,
Che acquistò roba, onor, virtute, e ingegno?

L'Altissimo, in Bart. Scalæ vita a Mannio. Flor. 1768.

[x] Veni nudus omnium rerum bonarum, egenus ad Remp. vilissimis ortus parentibus, multa cum fide, nullis omnino divitiis, aut titulis, nullis clientelis, nullis cognationibus. Cosmus tamen Pater patriæ nostræ me complexus est, recepitque in familiæ obsequia, &c.

Scalæ Ep. inter. Pol. Ep. lib. xii. *Ep.* 16.

he lived to complete only four books[y]. His apologues are highly commended by Landino and Ficino. Of his poetry, specimens remain both in the Latin and Italian languages, and the former have obtained a place in the celebrated collection of the Latin poems of his illustrious countrymen[z]. When the proverbial uncertainty of publick favour is considered, the life of Scala may be esteemed a life of unusual prosperity. He transacted the concerns of the republick with acknowledged fidelity, industry, and ability; arrived at the highest dignities of the state; amassed wealth; ranked with men of learning; and left at his death a numerous progeny to inherit his riches and his respectability. In his controversy with Politiano, he appears, however, as a scholar to manifest disadvantage; but the impetuosity of his adversary hurried him into a contest which it is evident he would willingly have avoided, and in which every effort to extricate himself only brought down a severer chastisement.

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From

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[y] Hos edere Johannes Cinellius paraverat, sed id contigit Oligero Jacobæi, ope Cl. Magliabechii, sumptibus Nicolai Angeli Tinassi, anno MDCLXXVII.

Manni. vita Bart. Scalæ, p. 47.

[z] *Carm. illust. Poet. Ital. v.* iii. *p.* 489.

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His controversy with Politiano.

From the epistles of Politiano it appears, that for some time these angry disputants had shared the favour of Lorenzo de' Medici without discovering any symptoms of jealousy, and had even been in the habit of submitting to each other their literary works for mutual correction. Scala, however, having discovered, or suspected, that Lorenzo had employed Politiano to revise the letters which he had written in the execution of his office, as chancellor of the republick, began to entertain a secret enmity against his rival, and omitted no opportunity of depreciating his writings[a]. Politiano was no sooner aware that his literary reputation was attacked, than he gave a loose to feelings which it is probable he had before with difficulty suppressed; and notwithstanding the rank and respectability of Scala, addressed him in a style that shows the high opinion which he entertained of his own talents, and his contempt of those of his adversary. Alluding, in one of his letters, to the parentage of Scala, he gives him the appellation of *monstrum furfuraceum*. In another, he honours him with a comment on this

[a] Scis autem tu quoque literas illum (Laurentium) sæpe tuas publice scriptas rejecisse, nobisque dedisse formandas, quæ prima odii livorisque in me tui causa extitit. *Pol. Ep. lib.* xii. *Ep.* 18.

this title[b]. To the boasting of Scala, respecting the approbation expressed of him by Lorenzo, he returns an answer which in these days (whether more polished or more barbarous, the reader may determine) could only have been expiated in the blood of one of the disputants[c]. In this transaction it must be allowed that Politiano suffered himself to be carried beyond all reasonable bounds, and forgot that respect which he owed, if not to the character of his opponent, at least to his own dignity and reputation. It may perhaps be thought that Lorenzo de' Medici ought to have interposed his authority to suppress a contest which contributed so little to the credit of the parties, but it was not till after the death of Lorenzo that the dispute became so outrageous. It must be observed that Menckenius, the historian of Politiano, has on this occasion attributed to the expressions

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[b] At ego *monstrum* te vocavi *furfuraceum*; monstrum quidem, quod ex colluvione monstrorum compositus es, furfuraceum vero, quod in pistrini sordibus natus, et quidem pistrino dignissimus. *Pol. Ep. lib.* xii. *Ep.* 18.

[c] "Extat," thus Scala writes to Politiano, "et illa "de me Laurentii Medicis præclarissima vox, qua nus- "quam collocatum melius fuisse honorem homini novo "testificatus est." *Lib.* xii. *Ep.* 16. To which Politiano laconically replies, "De Cosmo quæ jactas, deque Lau- "rentio Medice, *falsa omnia*." *Ibid. Ep.* 18.

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expressions of Scala, an import which it is certain they were not intended to convey[d].

If

[d] In the early part of the quarrel, Scala has the following passage, in a letter to Politiano: "Tu certe "præter cæteros, mi Politiane, naturæ multum debes, "illa tibi ingenium istud dedit: ut corporis modo præter- "mittam dotes, quæ nonnihil et ipsæ habere a quibus- "dam putantur momenti ad felicitatem et fortunæ com- "moda: quæ profecto juvare nativam virtutem, nisi "ipsa sese deserat, vehementer solent. Cæcus sit fun- "ditus qui hæc non viderit." "Si quid video (says "Menckenius) sunt et hæc per ludibrium forsan et per "invidiam a Scala dicta, ut obscœnos Politiani mores "perstringeret, quasi is nempe corporis sui copiam "principi juventuti fecerit, semper ita amantes studiosos- "que sui Medicæos habiturus. Ut adeo mirari vix satis "possim, non sensisse hos aculeos, nec his quidquam "reposuisse Politianum," &c. In supposing he could see so much clearer into the concerns of Politiano than Politiano himself, Menckenius is mistaken; it certainly never came into the head of either of the disputants, that this passage contained any insinuation of the nature alluded to by Menckenius. Giuliano de' Medici had been dead many years; nor had he in his lifetime given room for such an imputation; and at all events there is no probability that Scala would have hazarded the most remote insinuation of this kind, against a family on whose favour he existed, to say nothing of the inattention with which Politiano treats this passage, which he certainly considered only as a piece of ridicule on his *wry neck* and *hooked nose*, and as such thought it below his attention.

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If the circumstances before related were not sufficiently characteristick of the spirit of the times, we might advert to the other governments of Italy; where we should find, that offices of the highest trust and confidence were often filled by men who quitted the superintendence of an academy, or the chair of a professor, to transact the affairs of a nation. Alfonso, king of Naples, and Francesco Sforza, contended in liberality with each other, to secure the service of Beccatelli[e]. Pontano was the confidential adviser, and frequently the representative to other powers, of Ferdinand, the son of Alfonso[f]. The brothers of the family of Simoneta

Learned statesmen in other governments of Italy.

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[e] *Zeno, Diss. Voss. v.* i. *p.* 309. *et vide ante, v.* I. *p.* 71.

[f] Giovanni Pontano, or, according to the academical appellation which he adopted, Jovianus Pontanus, was a native of Cerreto, in Umbria, but when young and friendless took up his residence at Naples. His learning recommended him to Alfonso, and afterwards to Ferdinando; by whom he was intrusted with the highest offices of the state. Besides his undertaking many important embassies, Pontano was chief secretary to the king, and on one occasion his representative as viceroy of Naples. As a scholar he was the only peron of the age whose productions can contend for superiority with those of Politiano. His poems were published by Aldus in two volumes, 1513, 1518. His prose works in thee volumes, 1518, 1519.

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neta directed for a considerable time the affairs of Milan[g]. Bernardo Bembo, and Francesco Barbaro, maintained the literary, no less than the political dignity of the Venetian republick. When eminent talents were not engaged in publick services, they were rewarded by the most flattering attention, and often by the pecuniary bounty of illustrious individuals, who relaxed from the fastidiousness of rank, in the company of men of learning, or have left memorials of their regard by their epistolary correspondence.

Nor

1519. Among the latter is a treatise *De Ingratitudine*, in which he assumes the merit of having been instrumental in concluding peace between Ferdinand and the pope, and gives a loose to his exultation in having rendered his king so important a service; but alas! Pontano lived to give the fullest comment on his treatise in his own conduct. For although he enjoyed the favour of the family of Arragon, for nearly half a century, yet when Charles VIII. of France, in the year 1495, seized upon the kingdom of Naples, and assumed the emblems of royalty, Pontano, in the name of the Neapolitans, made the publick oration to him, and took care not to forget the defects of his royal patrons, with which he had the best opportunities of being acquainted. *Zeno. Diss. Voss. v.* ii. *p.* 172. *Guicciard. Ist. d' Italia, lib.* ii. Pontano died in 1603, at the age of 77 years.

[g] *Vide ante, v.* I. *p.* 234.

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Men of rank devote themselves to study.

Nor was it seldom that the characters of the scholar, and of the man of rank were united in the same person. Of this Giovanni Pico of Mirandula, to whom we have before frequently adverted, is perhaps the most illustrious instance. This accomplished nobleman, of whom many extraordinary circumstances are related, and who certainly exhibited a wonderful example of the powers of the human mind, was born at Mirandula in the year 1463, and was one of the younger children of Giovan-Francesco Pico, prince of Mirandula and Concordia[h]. So quick was his apprehension, so retentive his memory, that we are told a single recital was sufficient to fix in his mind whatever became the object of his attention. After having spent seven years in the most celebrated universities

Pico of Mirandula.

[h] Voltaire, who erroneously gives Pico the name of Jean François, is also mistaken in relating that he resigned the sovereignty of Mirandula to reside at Florence. *Essai, tom.* ii. *p.* 296. *Ed. Gen.* Pico neither enjoyed nor had any pretensions to the sovereignty, which, after the death of his father, devolved on his elder brother Galeotto, and afterwards on his nephew Giovan-Francesco; by whom we have a voluminous life of his uncle, written in Latin, and prefixed to his works, which, whilst it affords much information respecting this extraordinary man, displays a deplorable degree of superstition in the author. The mother of Pico was of the family of Boyardo the poet.

CHAP. VII. universities of Italy and France, he arrived at Rome in the twenty-first year of his age, with the reputation of being acquainted with twenty-two different languages[i]. Eager to signalize himself as a disputant, Pico proposed for publick debate nine hundred questions, on mathematical, theological, and scholastick subjects, including also inquiries into the most abstruse points of the Hebraick, Chaldaick, and Arabick tongues[k]. This measure, which in its worst light could only be considered as an ebullition of youthful vanity,

[i] "Cela," says Voltaire very justly, "n'est certainement par dans le cours ordinaire de la nature. Il n'y "a point de langue que ne demande environ un année "pour la bien savoir. Quiconque dans une si grande "jeunesse en sait vingt deux, peut etre soupçonne de les "savoir bien mal, ou plutot il en sait les elemens, ce qui "est ne rien savoir." *Essai, ut sup.*

[k] Voltaire, not satisfied with these 900 questions, has increased their number to 1400; and informs us that they may be found at the head of the works of Pico. *Essai ut sup.* It is to be wished that he had pointed out in what edition of the works of Pico he had discovered these questions; for the existence of which he seems to have had the same authority as he had for supposing that the learning of those days consisted merely in an acquaintance with the sophisms of the schoolmen, or that the sciences were then held in contempt by princes and men of eminence. Assertions unworthy of an author who professes to write *sur les mœurs & l'esprit de nations.*

vanity, might, without any great injustice, have been suffered to evaporate in neglect; but the Romish prelates, instead of consigning these propositions to their fate, or debating them with the impartiality of philosophers, began to examine them with the suspicious eyes of churchmen, and selected thirteen of them as heretical. To vindicate his labours from this dangerous imputation, Pico composed a Latin treatise of considerable extent, which he is said to have written in the space of twenty days, and which he inscribed to Lorenzo de' Medici, under whose protection he had sheltered himself from persecution at Florence[1]. The character and acquirements of Pico afforded to his contemporaries a subject for the most unbounded panegyrick. "He was a man," says Politiano, "or rather "a hero, on whom nature had lavished all the "endowments both of body and mind; erect "and elegant in his person, there was some-"thing in his appearance almost divine. Of a "perspicacious mind, a wonderful memory, in-"defatigable in study, distinct and eloquent in "speech,

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[1] *Apologia tredecim quæstionum.* This treatise was published with the other Latin works of Pico, at Venice, *per Bernardinum Venetum*, an. MCCCCLXXXXVIII. in folio, from which edition I shall give the dedication of the *Apologia*, as it is strongly expressive of the esteem and admiration of its author, for Lorenzo de' Medici. *v. App. No.* LIV.

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" speech, it seems doubtful whether he was " more conspicuous for his talents or his virtues. " Intimately conversant with every department " of philosophy, improved and invigorated by " the knowledge of various languages, and of " every honourable science, it may truly be " said, that no commendation is equal to his " praise."

The instances before given of the critical talents of Pico, whatever may be thought of their accuracy, will at least justify him from the reproof of Voltaire, who is of opinion that the works of Dante and Petrarca would have been a more suitable study for him, than the summary of St. Thomas, or the compilation of Albert the great[m]. But the literary pursuits of Pico were not confined to commentaries upon the works of others. From the specimens which remain of his poetical compositions in his native language, there is reason to form a favourable judgment of those which have perished. Crescimbeni confesses, that by his early death the Tuscan poetry sustained a heavy loss, and that his accomplished pen might have rescued it from its degraded state, without the intervention of so many

[m] *Volt. Essai, tom.* ii. *p.* 296.

many other eminent men, whose labours had been employed to the same purpose[n]. The few pieces which remain of his Latin poetry induce us to regret the severity of their author. These poems he had arranged in five books, which he submitted to the correction of Politiano, who, having performed his task, returned them to their author, with an elegant apology for the freedoms he had taken[o]. Soon afterwards Pico committed his five books to the flames, to the great regret of Politiano, who has perpetuated this incident by a Greek epigram[p]. If the works thus destroyed were equal in merit to his Latin elegy addressed to Girolamo Benivieni, posterity have indeed reason to lament the loss[q].

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Among

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[n] *Crescimb. Ist. della volgar poesia. v.* ii. *p.* 336.

[o] Neque ego judicis (ita me semper ames) sed Momi personam indui, quem ferunt sandalium Veneris tandem culpasse, cum Venerem non posset. Confodi igitur versiculos aliquos, non quod eos improbarem, sed quod tanquam equestris ordinis, cedere reliquis, veluti senatoribus videbantur atque patriciis. *Pol. Ep. lib.* i. *Ep.* 4.

[p] *Ibid. lib.* i. *Ep.* 7.

[q] Opere di Benivieni, *p.* 75. *Ed. Ven.* 1524.

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Learned women.

Among the circumstances favourable to the promotion of letters in the fifteenth century, another yet remains to be noticed, which it would be unpardonable to omit; and which, if it did not greatly contribute towards their progress, certainly tended, not only to render the study of languages more general, but to remove the idea that the acquisition of them was attended with any extraordinary difficulty. This was the partiality shown to these studies, and the proficiency made in them, by women, illustrious by their birth, or eminent for their personal accomplishments. Among these, Alessandra, the daughter of Bartolomeo Scala, was peculiarly distinguished. The extraordinary beauty of her person was surpassed by the endowments of her mind. At an early age she was a proficient, not only in the Latin, but the Greek tongue[r], which she had studied under Joannes Lascar and Demetrius Chalcondyles. Such an union of excellence attracted the attention, and is supposed to have engaged the affections of Politiano; but Alessandra gave her hand to the Greek Marullus, who enjoyed at Florence the favour

Alessandra Scala.

[r] Some of the Greek poems of Alessandra appear in the works of Politiano. *Ed. Ald.* 1498. And Politiano is supposed to have addressed to this lady several of his amorous verses.

favour of Lorenzo de' Medici, and in the elegance of his Latin compositions, emulated the Italians themselves[s]. Hence probably arose those dissensions between Marullus and Politiano, CHAP. VII.

[s] The works of Marullus were published at Florence, under the title of HYMNI ET EPIGRAMMATA. At the close we read, *Impressit Florentiæ Societas Colubris* vi. *kal. Decembris*, MCCCCLXXXXVII. His epigrams are inscribed to Lorenzo, the son of Pier-Francesco de' Medici. The following lines to the father of his mistress possess no inconsiderable share of elegance:

AD BARTHOLOMEUM SCALAM.

Cum musæ tibi debeant latinæ
Tot juncto pede scripta, tot soluto,
Tot sales latio lepore tinctos,
Tot cultis documenta sub figuris,
Tot volumina patriæ dicata
Quæ nulli taceant diu minores,
Tot prætória jura, tot curules,
Tot fasces proprio labore partos:
Plus multo tamen, o beate amice, est
Quod Scalam Latio pater dedisti,
Aucturam numerum novem sorórum
Casto carmine, castiore vita.

The three books of Hymns of Marullus are addressed, not to the objects of Christian worship, but to the Pagan deities, or the phenomena of nature, whence, perhaps, the remark of Erasmus: "Marulli pauca legi, tolerabilia, "si minus haberent paganitatis."

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tiano, the monuments of which yet remain in their writings[t].

Cassandra Fidelis.

Of yet greater celebrity is the name of Cassandra Fidelis. Descended from ancestors who had changed their residence from Milan to Venice, and had uniformly added to the respectability of their rank by their uncommon learning, she began at an early age to prosecute her studies with great diligence, and acquired such a knowledge of the learned languages, that she may with justice be enumerated among the first scholars of the age[u]. The letters which occasionally passed between Cassandra and Politiano demonstrate their mutual esteem, if indeed such expression be sufficient to characterize the feelings of Politiano, who expresses, in language unusually florid, his high admiration of

[t] Among the epigrams of Politiano are several of the most outrageous kind, against some person whom he attacks under the name of *Mabilius*; and in the poems of Marullus are some pieces, little inferiour in abuse, of which *Ecnomus* is the subject. Under these masks it is supposed, and not without reason, that these rival scholars directed their shafts against each other.

[u] The letters and orations of this lady were published at *Pavia*, in 1636, by Jac. Ph. Tomasini, who has prefixed to them some account of her life.

of her extraordinary acquirements, and his expectation of the benefits which the cause of letters would derive from her labours and example[v]. In the year 1491, the Florentine scholar made a visit to Venice, where the favourable opinion which he had formed of her writings was confirmed by a personal interview. "Yesterday," says he, writing to his great patron, "I paid a visit to the celebrated Cassandra, to whom I presented your respects. "She is indeed, Lorenzo, a surprising woman, "as well from her acquirements in her own "language, as in the Latin; and in my opinion "she may be called handsome. I left her, astonished at her talents. She is much devoted "to

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[v] "O decus Italiæ, virgo, quas dicere grates, quasve "referre parem, quod etiam honore me tuarum literarum non dedignaris? mira profecto fides, tales proficisci à femina, quid autem à femina dico, imò verò "à puella et virgine potuisse," &c. "Tibi verò tanta "incepta Deus optimus maximus secundet: et cum "recesseris à parentibus, is autor contingat, et consors "qui sit ista virtute non indignus: ut quæ nunc propemodum sua sponte naturalis ingenii flamma semel emicuit, ita crebris deinceps aut audita flatibus, aut enutrita fomitibus effulgeat, ut a nostrorum hominum "præcordiis animoque, nox omnis, geluque, penitus et "languoris in literis et inscitiæ discutiatur." *Pol. Ep. int. Case. Fid. Ep.* 101.

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" to your interests, and speaks of you with " great esteem. She even avows her intention " of visiting you at Florence, so that you may " prepare yourself to give her a proper recep- " tion[w]." From a letter of this lady, many years afterwards, to Leo X. we learn, that an epistolary correspondence had subsisted between her and Lorenzo de' Medici[x]; and it is with concern we perceive, that the remembrance of this intercourse is revived, in order to induce the pontiff to bestow upon her some pecuniary assistance; she being then a widow, with a numerous train of dependants. She lived, however, to a far more advanced period, and died in the year 1558, having then completed a full century. Her literary acquirements, and the reputation of her early associates, threw a lustre on her declining years; and as her memory remained unimpaired to the last, she was resorted to from all parts of Italy, as a living monument of those happier days, to which the Italians never adverted without regret[y].

That this attention to serious studies, by which the celebrated women distinguished themselves,

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[w] *v. Pol. Ep. in App. No.* LI.

[x] *Cass. Fidelis. Ep.* 123.

[y] *Tomasin. in vitâ Cassandræ, p.* 42.

selves, was the characteristick of the sex in general, cannot perhaps be with truth asserted. The admiration bestowed on those who had signalized themselves, affords indeed a strong presumption to the contrary. Yet the pretensions of the sex to literary eminence were not confined to these instances. The Italian historians have noticed many other women of high rank who obtained by their learning no inconsiderable share of applause[z]. Politiano celebrates as a tenth muse a lady of Sienna, to whom he gives the name of Cecca[a]; and from the numerous pieces in the learned languages, professedly addressed to women, we may reasonably infer, that these studies were at that time more generally diffused amongst them, than they have been at any subsequent period.

Result of the attention shown to classical learning.

Having thus adverted to some of the principal causes which accelerated the progress of classical literature in the fifteenth century, and observed the active part which Lorenzo de' Medici

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[z] *Tiraboschi, Storia della Lett. Ital. vol.* vi. *parte* 2. *p.* 163.

[a] Mnemosyne audito Senensis carmine Ceccæ,
Quando inquit decima est nata puella mihi?

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Medici took in every transaction that was favourable to its promotion, it may now be proper briefly to inquire what was the result of exertions so earnestly made, and so long continued; and whether the tree, which had been transplanted with so much difficulty, and nourished by such constant attention, brought forth fruit sufficient to repay the labour that had been bestowed upon it.

Translations.

One of the first efforts of the Italian scholars was the translation of the most eminent Greek authors into Latin. Among the earliest and most assiduous of these translators is Leonardo Arétino, whose versions of various works of Plato, Xenophon, Plutarch, and other Greek authors, form a list too extensive to be recognised in the present work[b]. The labours of Ficino, though not so numerous, are yet more voluminous. Some account of them is found in a Latin epistle from their author to Politiano: "Why, my friend," says Ficino, "have you

"so

[b] A very full catalogue of the works of Leonardo is given by Laur. Mehus, and prefixed to his edition of the Letters of this celebrated scholar. *Flor.* 1741. This catalogue comprises no less than sixty-three different productions, many of which are translations from the Greek.

"so often desired to know what works I have "published? Is it that you may celebrate them "in your verses? But approbation is not due "to number so much as to choice, and merit is "distinguished by quality rather than quan-"tity[c]." If Ficino had adhered more closely to this maxim, it would certainly have diminished nothing of his reputation, which is buried under the immense mass of his own labours. The earliest production in this department of literature, which united elegance with fidelity, is the translation of the history of Herodian, by Politiano[d]. This work he inscribed to Innocent

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[c] *v. Appx. No.* LV. Of the works there mentioned, several have been published, the early editions of which are yet held in esteem. His translation of Plato was first printed at Florence without date, and again at Venice, 1491. His version of Plotinus, printed by Miscomini, at the expense of Lorenzo de' Medici, though not published till after his death, is a fine specimen of typography. At the close we read,

Magnifico sumptu Laurentii Medicis patriæ servatoris, impressit ex archetypo Antonius Miscominus Florentiæ Anno MCCCCLXXXXII *Nonis Maii.*

[d] Printed three times in the year 1493, viz. at Rome, at Bologna by *Plato de Benedictis*, and at the last mentioned place by *Bazalerius de Bazaleriis*. Of these editions the second is the most esteemed.

Maittaire, Ann. Typ. v. i. *p.* 558. *De Bure, Bibl. Inst. No.* 4840.

CHAP. VII. cent VIII. in a manly and judicious address, in which he briefly states the rules that he had prescribed to himself in the execution of his work, which are yet deserving of the notice of all who engage in similar undertakings [e].

From his early years Politiano had closely attached himself to the study of the writings of Homer; and whilst he was very young, had begun to translate the Iliad into Latin hexameter verse [f]. Whoever is acquainted with the great

[e] Quæ sane nostræ fuerunt partes, tentavimus profecto, utinamque etiam effecerimus, uti omnia ex fide responderent, ne inepta peregrinitas, ne græculæ usquam figuræ, nisi si quæ jam pro receptis habentur, latinam quasi polluerent castitatem; ut eadem propemodum esset linguæ utriusque perspicuitas, eædemque munditiæ, idem utrobique sensus atque indoles, nulla vocum morositas, nulla anxietas. *Pol. in præfat. Ed. Ald.* 1498.

[f] An epitome of the Iliad in Latin verse under the fictitious name of Pindar the Theban, is amongst the MSS. of the Laurentian Lib. *Plut.* xxxviii. *Cod.* xii. 2. and has also been published in the Ed. of Homer by Spondanus, Basil 1583. Another translation of the Grecian bard is said to have been executed in the fifteenth century by Niccolo Valla, who died at twenty-one years of age. *P. Cortes. de Hom. doct. p.* 46. *Valerian. de Literat. Infel. lib.* ii. A translation of the Iliad into Latin prose, by Lorenzo Valla, was published at Brescia 1474, and Lorenzo

great extent of his powers, and the peculiar energy of his Latin compositions, will regret that of this monument of his industry not a vestige remains. That he had made a considerable progress in this work, appears from many authorities; and there is even reason to believe, that his perseverance finally overcame the difficulties of his undertaking. Ficino, writing to Lorenzo de' Medici, and congratulating him on the success of his attention to liberal studies, particularly adverts to the protection afforded by him to Politiano, of whose translation of the Grecian bard he speaks in those terms of florid adulation which too frequently characterize his letters[g]. Another contemporary author has also

Lorenzo was accused of having availed himself of a translation made a century before by Leontius Pilatus; which translation has also been inscribed to Petrarca.

Hod. de Græc. illust. p. 10.

g "Divites alii ferme omnes ministros nutriunt voluptatum; Tu sacerdotes musarum nutris: perge precor mi Laurenti; nam illi voluptatum servi evadent, tu vero musarum delitiæ. Summus musarum sacerdos, Homerus, in Italiam, te duce, venit. Et qui hactenus circum vagus et mendicus fuit, tandem apud te dulce hospitium repperit. Nutris domi Homericum illum adolescentem, Angelum Politianum, qui græcam Homeri personam latinis coloribus exprimat. Exprimit, jam, atque id quod mirum est in tam tenerâ ætate,

CHAP. VII. also plainly indicated that Politiano completed his important task[h], to the progress of which he has occasionally adverted in his own works[i]. Whether his youthful labours fell a sacrifice to the severity of his riper judgment, or perished in the general dispersion of the Medicean Library,

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" state, ita exprimit ut nisi quis græcum fuisse Home-
" rum noverit, dubitaturus sit, e duobus uter naturalis
' sit, et uter pictus Homerus," &c. *Fic. Ep. lib.* i.

[h] Amongst the Latin poems of Alessandro Braccio, the contemporary and friend of Politiano, and well known by his translation of the works of Appian, is the following epigram :

" AD LAURENTIUM MEDICEM.

" Tempora nostra tibi multum debentia, Laurens,
" Non minus hoc debent, nobile propter opus,
" Maeonium, duce te quod nuper et auspice, vatem,
" Convertit Latios Angelus in numeros,
" Cumque decore suo, cum majestate legendum,
" Dat nobis qualem Græcia docta legit,
" Ut dubites *Latius* malit quam *Græcus Homerus*
" Esse, magis patrius hunc nisi vincat amor."

Band. Cat. lib. Laur. iii. 780.

[i] " Nam et ego is sum qui ab ineunte adolescentia,
" ita hujus eminentissimi poetæ studio ardoreque flagra-
" verim, ut non modo eum totum legendo olfecerim,
" pœneque contriverim, sed juvenili quodam, ac prope
" temerario ausu, vertere etiam in Latinum tentaverim."

Pol. Orat. in expositione Homeri. in op. Ald. 1498.

Library, of which he lived to be a witness, is a question which must yet remain undecided. CHAP. VII.

Italian writers of Latin poetry.

The early part of the fifteenth century was distinguished by a warm admiration of the writings of the ancients, and an extreme avidity to possess them. This was succeeded, as might be expected, by an attention to the accuracy of the text, and an ardent desire of transfusing their beauties into a language more generally known. Towards the latter part of the century a further progress was made; and from commenting, and translating, the Italians began to emulate these remains of ancient genius. Those who distinguished themselves during the time of Cosmo and Piero de' Medici, have already attracted some share of our notice; but it must in general be acknowledged, that although their labours exhibit at times a tolerable knowledge of the mechanical parts of learning, and have the body and form of poetick composition, yet the animating spirit that should communicate life and motion is sought for in vain; or if it be any where discoverable, is only to be found in the licentious productions of Beccatelli[k]. Of that kind

[k] *v. ante, v.* I. *p.* 71.

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kind of composition which may be called classical, modern Italy had seen no examples. The writings of Landino, of which specimens have been already given, are however entitled to some share of approbation; and if they be not marked by any powerful efforts of imagination, nor remind us strongly of the ancient authors, they possess a flow of language, and a facility of diction and versification, much superiour to his predecessors. A further proficiency was made by Naldo Naldio, or *Naldo de Naldis*, the friend of Ficino and Politiano, and the frequent panegyrist of the Medici[1]. The poem of Ugolino Verini,

Landino.

Ugolino Verini.

[1] The poems of Naldio are printed in the *Selecta Poemata Italorum*, v. vi. *fl.* 412. Of these the first is addressed, *Ad Petrum Medicem in obitu magni Cosmi ejus genitoris, qui vere dum vixit optimus Parens Patriæ cognominatus fuit.* An extract from this piece in the Appendix, No. LVI. will sufficiently shew, that Naldio was possessed of no inconsiderable talents for Latin poetry. Another of the poems of Naldio is addressed to Annalena, a nun, probably the sister-in-law of Bernardo Pulci, (*v. ante, vol.* I. *fl.* 245.), in which the poet laments the death of Albiera Albizzi, the wife of Sigismundo Stufa, on whose death Politiano has also left a beautiful Latin elegy. It is probable there were two successive authors of this name, whose works were inserted in the *Carmina illust.* as it can scarcely be supposed that the same person who addressed himself to Piero on the death of his father in 1464, and had before written a poem to Cosmo on the death of his son

Verini, "*De illustratione Urbis Florentiæ*," is perhaps more valuable for the authenticity of the information it communicates, than for its poetical excellence, yet Verini has left other testimonies that entitle him to rank with the first Latin poets of his age[m]. These pieces are principally devoted to the praises of the Medici, and

son John, should be the author of the pieces in this collection, which are inscribed to Leo X. who did not enter on his pontificate till 1513. Politiano has left the following commendatory epigram on the writings of Naldio:

Dum celebrat Medicem *Naldus*, dum laudat amicam,
Et pariter gemino raptus amore canit,
Tam lepidum unanimes illi ornavere libellum,
Phœbus, Amor, Pallas, Gratia, Musa, Fides.

[m] The example of Landino in affixing to his poetical labours the name of his mistress (*v. ante*, *vol.* I. *p.* 123.) was followed by Verini, who gave the title of *Flametta* to his two books of Latin elegies, which he inscribed to Lorenzo de' Medici, and which yet remain in the Laurentian Library. *Plut.* XXXIX. *cod.* 42. Bandini supposes that Landino, as well as many other learned men of those times, had a real object of his passion, for which he gives a very satisfactory reason. "Neque hoc nomen "fictum esse crediderim, quum revera mihi compertum "sit, illius ævi litteratos viros, *ut nunc quoque accidit*, "puellas in deliciis habuisse plurimum, in earumque "laudem carmina, ad instar illa Ovidii quæ amatoria "nuncupantur, exarasse."

Band. Spec. Lit. Flor. v. i. *p.* 120.

CHAP. VII. and frequently advert to the characters of Lorenzo and Giuliano, and to the circumstances of the times[n].

Michael Verini.

In Michael Verini, the son of Ugolino, we have a surprising instance of early attainments in learning. He was born in 1465; and although he died at the age of seventeen years, yet in that short space of time he had obtained the admiration, and conciliated the esteem of his learned contemporaries. His principal work is a collection of Latin *disticha*, which exhibit great facility both of invention and expression, and an acquaintance with human life and manners far beyond his years. His Latin letters, of which a large collection is preserved in the Laurentian Library[o], and which are chiefly addressed to his father, are as honourable to the paternal kindness of the one, as to the

[n] In the Laurentian Library (*Plut.* xxvi. *cod.* 21.) is preserved a poem by Ugolino, to which he has given the name of *Paradisus*. On his imaginary excursion to the celestial regions, the poet meets with Cosmo de' Medici, who converses with him at great length on the affairs of Florence, and particularly on the situation of his own family.

[o] *Plut.* lxxxx. *cod.* 28. From these letters Bandini has in his valuable catalogue given copious extracts. *v.* iii. *p.* 462, *et seq.*

the filial affection of the other. His death is said to have been occasioned by his repugnance to obey the prescription of his physicians, who recommended an experiment which it seems his modesty did not approve, and he fell a sacrifice to his pertinacious chastity [p]. From his letters it appears that both he and his father lived on terms of intimacy and friendship with Landino, Bartolomeo Fontio, and Politiano, and that Lorenzo

[p] This event has been commemorated both in verse and prose, in Latin and Italian, by many contemporary authors. (*v. Appx. No.* LVII.) Verini is not the only instance of the kind on record. If we may believe Ammirato, the death of the cardinal of Lisbon in 1459 was occasioned by a similar circumstance. *Amm. Ist. Flor. v.* iii. *p.* 89. That such a remedy had been prescribed to Verini is apparent from the following affecting passage in one of his letters: "Insuperabilis me vali-
"tudo confecit, membra ut sint pallore macieque de-
"formia; nocte crucior, die non quiesco, et quod me
"acrius torquet, in tanto dolore spes nulla salutis.
"Quamquam medici, et tota domus, et amici, nihil
"pericli asserant, deprehendo tamen tacitos in vultu
"timores, suspiria, murmur, taciturnitatem, mœroris
"cuncta signa prospicio; sed cui notior morbus quam
"mihi? Quidquid acciderit, utinam forti animo fera-
"mus; scio mihi nullum de vita factum restare pœni-
"tendum, nisi quod potueram valitudini consulere
"sapientius; verum mihi *pudor*, vel potius *rusticitas*
"obfuit—vale."

CHAP. VII. Lorenzo de' Medici occasionally passed a leisure hour in convivial intercourse with this learned family [q].

Other Latin poets of the fifteenth century.

The reputation acquired by the Florentines in the cultivation of Latin poetry stimulated the exertions of other Italian scholars. On the memorable occasion of the conspiracy of the Pazzi, Platinus Platus, a Milanese, addressed to Lorenzo de' Medici a copy of verses, which obtained his warm approbation [r]. The exertions of Lorenzo in establishing

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[q] "Fingit Homerus Jovem ipsum, aliosque Deos, "Olympo relicto, apud Ethiopas divertisse, cœnasse, "lusisse: Augustum etiam orbis terrarum principem, "apud privatos sine ullo apparatu cœnitasse: sed cur "vetera? Laurentius Medices urbis nostræ facile "primus, apud patrem meum pransus est nonnun-"quam," &c.

Mic. Ver. Ep. 15. *ad Sim. Canisianum ap. Band. Cat. v.* iii. *p.* 483.

[r] Laurentius Medices, quanta voluptate adficeretur in perlegendis poeticis ejusdem (Plati) lucubrationibus, quantoque illum in pretio haberet, testatus est in epistola ad ipsum scripta, ob acceptum ex ejus carminibus non mediocre doloris levamen in nefarie patrata fratris sui cæde: ait enim, "vetus est verbum, mi Platine, *tuevavem* "*esse in luctu musicam:* ego vero tuis perlectis versiculis, "re-

blishing the academy at Pisa gave rise to a poem of greater merit and importance, by Carolus de Maximis[s]. To the authors before mentioned we may add the names of Cantalicio, Nicodemo Folengi, Alessandro Braccio, and Aurelio Augurelli, all of whom have cultivated Latin poetry with different degrees of success, and have addressed some portion of their works to Lorenzo de' Medici, to which the reader may not be displeased to refer[t].

Of

" re ipsa reperi nihil tam maxime ad solatium facere " quam musicam.". *Saxius in Hist. Litterario Typogr. Mediol. ap. Band. in Cat. Bib. Laur. v.* ii. *p.* 193. These verses are published in the *Select. Poem. Ital. v.* vii. *p.* 256.

[s] DE STUDIO PISANAE URBIS ET EJUS SITUS MAXIMA FELICITATE AD LAURENTIUM MEDICEM. This piece is preserved in the Laurentian Library (*Plut.* lxxxxi. *cod.* 46. *v. Band. Cat. v.* iii. *p.* 850.), and contains so full, and at the same time so elegant an eulogy on the character of Lorenzo, and particularly on his attention to the promotion of letters, that I have given it a place in the Appendix, No. LVIII.

[t] The poems of Cantalicio are published in the *Carmina Illust. Poet. Ital. v.* iii. *p.* 123, and are inscribed to Lorenzo de' Medici. Those of Folengi are inserted in the same work, *vol.* iv. *p.* 419. Alessandro Braccio was equally eminent in politicks and letters. He was for some time secretary of the Florentine republick, and died on an embassy

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Of all these authors, though some possess a considerable share of merit, not one of them can

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embassy to pope Alexander VI. His translation of Appian into Italian is yet highly esteemed, and forms part of the *Collana*, or series of Italian historical works. The Latin poems of Braccio, though very numerous, have not yet been published, but are preserved in the Laurentian Library. *Plut.* lxxxxi. *cod.* 40, 41. Many of them are inscribed to Lorenzo de' Medici and other men of eminence, as Landino, Ficino, Bartolomeo Scala, Ugolino Verini, &c. I have before extracted some lines of this author to Lorenzo de' Medici, and shall hereafter avail myself of an opportunity of producing a more extensive specimen of his works. The following epigram addressed to Politiano is not inapplicable to our present subject:

v. Band. Cat. v. iii. *p.* 781.

AD ANGELUM BASSUM POLITIANENSEM.

Tanta tibi tenero quum surgat pectore virtus,
Quanta vel annoso vix queat esse seni,
Ac tua grandisono reboent quum, *Basse*, cothurno
Carmina, magnanimo non nisi digna duce,
Et tibi sit locuples oris facundia docti,
Teque suis ditet Græcia litterulis,
Te precor ad longos ut servet Juppiter annos,
Incolumemque sinat vivere posse diu.
Nam tua Mæonio multum certantia vati
Carmina quis dubitet, Virgilioque fore?
Atque decus clarum nostræ magnumque futurum
Quis neget ætatis te, memorande puer?
Sis igitur felix, nostri spes maxima saecli,
Teque putes nobis charius esse nihil.

Aurelio

can contend, in point of poetical excellence, with Politiano, who in his composition approaches nearer to the standard of the ancients than any man of his time; yet, whilst he emulates the dignity of Virgil, or reminds us of the elegance of Horace, he suggests not to our minds the idea of servile imitation. Of the character of his writings various opinions have indeed been entertained, which have been detailed at large by Baillet, and still more copiously by Menckenius[u]. It may therefore be sufficient on this occasion to caution the reader against an implicit acquiescence in the opinions of two eminent modern authors who have either obliquely censured or too cautiously approved his poetical works[v]. In the attempt made

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Character of the Latin poetry of Politiano.

Aurelio Augurelli is more generally known. His poems have frequently been published. The first edition is that of Verona, 1491, in 4to; the most correct and elegant, that of Aldus, 1505. These poems rank in the first class of modern Latin poetry.

[u] *Baillet Jugemens des Sçavans, vol.* iv. *p.* 18. *Menck. in vitâ Pol. passim.*

[v] Tiraboschi, adopting the sentiments of Giraldi, acknowledges that Politiano was possessed of a vivid genius, of extensive powers, and of uncommon and diversified

CHAP. VII. made by Politiano to restore a just taste for the literature of the ancients, it is not to be denied that he had powerful coadjutors in Pontano and Sanazaro[w], whose labours have given to the delightful

diversified erudition; but censures his Latin poetry as deficient in elegance and choice of expression. *Tirab. Storia della Lett. Ital. vol.* vi. *par.* 2. *p.* 234. Fabroni, adverting to the Italian poetry of Politiano, insinuates, that the Latin muses were reserved and coy, to one who had obtained the favour of their sister at so early an age, by his verses on the *Giostra* of Giuliano de' Medici. *Fabr. in vitâ Laur. p.* 157. To oppose to these opinions the authority of many other eminent men who have mentioned the Latin writings of Politiano with almost unlimited praise, would only be to detail the compilations of Baillet or Menckenius. But the works of Politiano are yet open to the inspection of the inquisitive scholar; and though certainly unequal in point of merit, perhaps according to the time of life at which they were produced, will be found, upon the whole, to possess a vigour of sentiment, a copiousness of imagination, and a classical elegance of expression, which, if considered with reference to the age in which he lived, entitle them to the highest esteem.

[w] Giacopo Sanazaro, or, by his academical appellation, Actius Sincerus Sanazarius, was a Neapolitan, born in the year 1458, and equally eminent by his Italian and Latin compositions. In the former, his reputation is chiefly founded on his *Arcadia*; in the latter, on his poem in three books, *De partu Virginis*, which is allowed, however, to be greatly blemished by the introduction of the Pagan deities to the mysteries of the Christian religion.

delightful vicinity of Naples new pretensions to the appellation of classick ground. Nor will it diminish his reputation if we admit that the empire which he had founded was in the next century extended and secured by the exertions of Fracastoro, Vida, Naugerio, and Flaminio[x], in

[x] I cannot mention these names without regretting the limits to which I am necessarily confined. The rivals of Virgil, of Ovid, and of Catullus, ought not, in a work that touches on the rise of letters, to be commemorated at the foot of a page. The *Syphilis* of Fracastoro, *sive de Morbo Gallico*, though an unpromising subject, is beyond comparison the finest Latin poem that has appeared since the times of the ancients. The writings of Vida are more generally known, and would be entitled to higher applause, if they did not frequently discover to the classical reader an imitation of the ancients that borders on servility. Naugerio was a noble Venetian, who died young on an embassy from the republick. In his last moments he destroyed all his writings then in his possession, as not being sufficiently correct for the publick eye; but the few that had been previously distributed among his friends were collected and published by them after his death, and breathe the true spirit of poetry. In Flaminio we have the simplicity and tenderness of Catullus, without his licentiousness. To those who are acquainted with his writings, it will not be thought extravagant to assert, that many of them, in the species of composition to which they are confined, were never excelled. The question addressed by him to a friend, respecting the writings of Catullus,

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in whom the great poets of the Augustan age seem once more to be revived.

General idea of the state of literature in Florence.

Whilst the study of polite literature was thus emerging from its state of reptile torpor, the other sciences felt the effects of the same invigorating beam; and the city of Florence, like a sheltered garden in the opening of spring, reechoed with the earliest sounds of returning animation. The Platonick academy existed in full splendour, and served as a common bond to unite, at stated intervals, those who had signalized themselves by scientifick or literary pursuits. The absurd pretensions of judicial astrology were freely examined and openly exposed; and observation and experiment were at length substituted in the place of conjecture and of fraud[y]. Paollo Toscanelli had already erected his

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Catullus, "Quando leggete—non vi sentite voi lique-"fare il cuore di dolcezza?" may with confidence be repeated to all those who are conversant with his works.

[y] Pico of Mirandula was one of the first who entered the lists against this formidable adversary of real knowledge, in his treatise in twelve books, *adversus Astrologos*, which is found in the general collection of his works. *Ven.* 1498.

his celebrated Gnomon[z]. Lorenzo da Volpaja constructed for Lorenzo de' Medici a clock, or piece of mechanism, which not only marked the hour of the day, but the motions of the sun and of the planets, the eclipses, the signs of the zodiack, and the whole revolutions of the heavens[a]. A laudable attempt was made by Francesco

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[z] This Gnomon, which has justly been denominated the noblest astronomical instrument in the world, was erected by Toscanelli, about the year 1460, for the purpose of determining the solstices, and thereby ascertaining the feasts of the Romish church. It is fixed in the cupola of the church of S. Maria del fiore, at the height of 277 Parisian feet. A small orifice transmits from that distance the rays of the sun to a marble flag, placed in the floor of the church. This instrument was, in the present century, corrected and improved at the instance of M. de la Condamine, who acknowledges it to be a striking proof of the capacity and extended views of its author.

[a] Politiano has left a very particular description of this curious piece of machinery. *Ep. lib.* iv. *Ep.* 8. A singular spectacle was also devised by Lorenzo de' Medici for the amusement of the populace, a memorial of which is preserved in a poem by Naldio, *Carm. Illust. v.* vi. *p.* 436. entitled *Elegia in septem Stellas errantes sub humana specie per urbem Florentinam curribus a Laurentio Medice Patriæ Patre duci jussas, more triumphantium.* From this poem we learn that the planets were personified and distinguished by their proper attributes, and that they performed

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cesco Berlinghieri to facilitate the study of geography, by uniting it with poetry[b]. In metaphysicks several treatises made their appearance, some of which are inscribed by their authors to Lorenzo de' Medici[c]. His efforts to promote the important science of medicine, and to rescue it from the absurdities in which it was enveloped, are acknowledged by several of its most eminent professors, who cultivated it on more rational principles, and have attributed their proficiency to his bounty[d]. In the practice and theory of musick,

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performed their evolutions to the sound of musick, with verses explanatory of their motions and supposed qualities.

Nec tantum signis quot erant ea sidera certis
Monstrasti, Medices, qua specieque forent,
Dulcibus at numeris suavi modulatus ab ore,
Singula quid faciant, præcipis arte cani.

[b] The *Geografia* of Berlinghieri was published with maps at Florence in the year 1480.

[c] Niccolo Fulginato addressed to Lorenzo his treatise *De Ideis*, which yet remains in manuscript in the Laurentian Library. *Plut.* lxxxii. *cod.* 22. *Band. Cat.* iii. 201. and Leonardo Nogarola a work entitled *De Immortalitate Animæ*. *Plut.* lxxxiii. *cod.* 22. *Band. Cat.* iii. 219.

[d] Bernardus de Torniis, dedicating to Giovanni de' Medici, when a cardinal, his treatise *de Cibis Quadragesimalibus*, thus addresses him: "Laurentius, pater tuus, "Reveren-

musick, Antonio Squarcialupi excelled all his predecessors; and Lorenzo is said to have written a poem in his praise [e]. His liberality was emulated by many other illustrious citizens, who were allied to him by affinity, or attached by the ties of friendship and of kindred studies, and the innumerable literary works of this period, the

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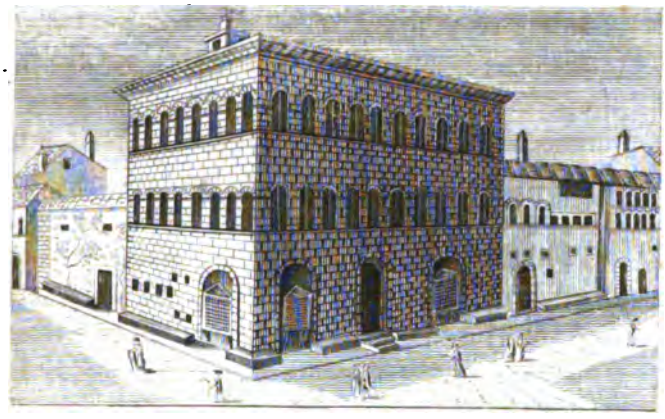
" Reverendissime Domine, tanta erga me utitur humani-
" tate, ac tot beneficiis Tornium adstringit, ut filiis totique
" domui, perpetuo me debere profitear. Degustavi nutu
" ejus medicinalem scientiam, neque sui caussa defuit
" quidquam, quo ad illius apicem potuerim pervenire." *Band. Cat. v.* i. *p.* 659. In the Laurentian Library are several medical works addressed to Lorenzo, as Joh. Calora. Compend. Febrium. *Band. Cat.* iii. 42. Joh. Aretini de Medicinæ et legum præstantia, &c. *ib.* iii. 141.

[e] This I mention on the authority of Mr. Tenhove. " En fait de musique," says he, giving an account of Leo Bat. Alberti, " il ne cédait qu'au seul Antoine " Squarcialupo. J'ai *sous les yeux* un poeme que Laurent " de' Médicis fit en l' honneur de ce dernier; car quel " est le genre de talens au quel Médicis ne faisait pas " accueil?" *Mem. Geneal. de la Maison de Medicis, lib.* x. *p.* 99. I regret that this poem of Lorenzo has escaped my researches. Valori relates, that Lorenzo being present when the character of this celebrated musician was the subject of censure, observed to his detracters, *If you knew how difficult it is to arrive at excellence in any science, you would speak of him with more respect.*

Val. in vitâ Laur. p. 45.



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HAVING hitherto traced the conduct of Lorenzo de' Medici in publick life, we may now be allowed to follow him to his domestick retreat, and observe him in the intercourse of his family, the education of his children, or the society of his friends. The mind of man varies with his local situation, and before it can be justly estimated, must be viewed in those moments when it expands in the warmth of confidence, and exhibits its true colours in the sunshine

Domestick character of Lorenzo.

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shine of affection. Whether it was from the suggestions of policy, or the versatility of his natural disposition, that Lorenzo de' Medici turned with such facility from concerns of high importance to the discussion of subjects of amusement, and the levity of convivial intercourse, certain it is, that few persons have displayed this faculty in so eminent a degree. "Think not," says Politiano, writing to his friend[a], "that any of our learned associates, "even they who have devoted their lives to "study, are to be esteemed superiour to Lo- "renzo de' Medici, either for acuteness in dis- "putation, or for good sense in forming a just "decision; or that he yields to any of them "in expressing his thoughts with facility, "variety, and elegance. The examples of "history are as familiar to him as the attend- "ants that surround his table; and when the "nature of his subject admits of it, his conver- "sation is abundantly seasoned with the salt "collected from that ocean, from which Venus "herself first sprung[b]." His talent for irony was

[a] *Ang. Polit. Lodovico Odaxio. Ep. lib.* iii. *Ep.* 6.

[b] ——— Lususque Salesque,
Sed lectus pelago, quo Venus orta sales,

says

was peculiar, and folly and absurdity seldom escaped his animadversion[c]. In the collections formed by the Florentines, of the *motti e burle* of celebrated men, Lorenzo bears a distinguished part; but when expressions adapted to the occasion of a moment are transplanted to the page of a book, and submitted to the cool consideration of the closet, they too often remind us of a flower cropt from its stalk, to be preserved in arid deformity. Possibly too, those who have assumed the task of selection may not have been accurate in their choice, and perhaps the celebrity of his name may have been an inducement to others to attribute to him witticisms unworthy of his character. Yet the *bon-mots* of Lorenzo may rank with many of those which have been published with importance, and read with avidity.

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says Jacques Moisant, Sieur de Brieux. *v.* Menagiana, *tom.* i. *p.* 59, where the author has traced this sentiment from Plutarch to Politiano, and downwards to Victorius, Heinsius, and de Brieux. "Quelque belle et fine, au "reste," says he, "que soit cette pensée, usée au- "jourd'hui comme elle est, on n' oserait plus la repé- "ter."

c "Quum jocabatur, nihil hilarius; quum mordebat "nihil asperius." *Valori, in vitâ, p.* 14.

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dity[d]. Grazzini has also introduced this eminent man as amusing himself with a piece of meditated jocularity, in order to free himself from the importunate visits of a physician, who too frequently appeared at his table; but for the veracity of this narrative, we have only the authority of a professed novelist[e]. Nor is it likely

[d] Several of them are related by Valori, and many others may be found in the *Facetie, Motti et Burle, di diversi Signori, &c. Raccolte per Lod. Domenichi. Ven.* 1588. One of his kinsmen, remarkable for his avarice, having boasted that he had at his villa a plentiful stream of fine water, Lorenzo replied, *If so, you might afford to keep cleaner hands.* Bartolommeo Soccini, of Sienna, having observed, in allusion to the defect in Lorenzo's sight, that the air of Florence was injurious to the eyes; *True*, said Lorenzo, *and that of Sienna to the brain.* Being interrogated by Ugolino Martelli, why he rose so late in the morning, Lorenzo in return inquired from Martelli, why he rose so soon, and finding that it was to employ himself in trifles, *My morning dreams*, said Lorenzo, *are better than thy morning's business.* When Soccini eloped from Florence, to evade his engagements as professor of civil law there, and being taken and brought back, was committed to prison, he complained that a man of his eminence should undergo such a shameful punishment. *You should remember*, said Lorenzo, *that the shame is not in the punishment, but in the crime. Val. p.* 14. *Dom. p.* 121, *&c.*

[e] Anton-Francesco Grazzini, detto Il Lasca. *Novelle, Ed. Lond.* 1756. *La terza Cena, Nov.* x. The argument of

likely that Lorenzo, though he frequently indulged in the license allowed by the Roman satirist, would have forgotten the precaution with which it is accompanied[f], or would have misemployed his time and his talents, in contriving and executing so insipid and childish an entertainment. CHAP. VIII.

Although

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of this novel is as follows: "Lorenzo vecchio de' Medici "da due travestiti, fa condurre Maestro Manente ubriaco "una sera dopo cena segretamente nel suo palagio, e "quivi e altrove lo tiene, senza sapere egli dove sia, "lungo tempo al bujo, facendogli portar mangiare da "due immascherati; dopo per via del Monaco buffone, "da a credere alle persone, lui esser morto di peste, "perciocchè cavato di casa sua un morto, in suo scambio "lo fa dissotterare. Il Magnifico poi con modo strava-"gante manda via Maestro Manente, il quale finalmente "creduto morto da ognuno, arriva in Firenze, dove la "moglie, pensando che fusse l'anima sua, lo caccia via "come se fusse lo spirito, e dalla gente avuto la corsa, "trova solo Burchiello, che lo riconosce, e piatendo "prima la moglie in Vescovado, e poi alli Otto è rimesso "la causa in Lorenzo, il quale fatto venire Nepo da "Galatrona, fa veder alle persone, ogni cosa esser inter-"venuta al Medico per forza d' incanti; sicche riavuta "la donna, Maestro Manente piglia per suo avvocato "San Cipriano."

[f] Nec lusisse pudet—sed non incidere ludum.
Hor. Ep. lib. i.

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Accused of being addicted to licentious amours.

Although there is reason to believe that Clarice Orsini, the wife of Lorenzo, was not the object of his early passion, yet that he lived with her in uninterrupted affection, and treated her on all occasions with the respect due to her rank and her virtues, appears from many circumstances. He has not, however, escaped an imputation which has sometimes attached itself to names of great celebrity, and which indeed too often taints the general mass of excellence with the leven of human nature. "Such a "combination of talents and of virtues," says Machiavelli, "as appeared in Lorenzo de' Me- "dici, was not counterbalanced by a single "fault, although he was incredibly devoted to "the indulgence of an amorous passion[g]." In asserting a particular defect, it is remarkable that the historian admits it not as an exception to his general approbation. Yet it is not to be denied, that if such an accusation were established, it would be difficult to apologize for Lorenzo, although the manners of the age, and the vivacity of his natural disposition, might be urged in extenuation of his misconduct. In justice, however, to his character, it must be observed,

[g] *Hist. Flor. lib.* viii.

observed, that the history of the times furnishes us with no information, either as to the circumstances attending his amours, or the particular objects of his passion[h]; nor indeed does there appear, from the testimony of his contemporaries, any reason to infer that he is justly charged with this deviation from the rules of virtue, and of decorum[i]. Probably this imputation is founded only on a presumption arising from the amorous tendency of some of his poetical

[h] On lui a encore reproché le defaut des ames héroïques et sensibles, trop de penchant à l' amour. Je sçai qu'il aima prodigieusement les femmes, et j' ignore comment cette sourse inépuisable de faiblesses, n'en fut point une pour lui. S'il brulait vivement, il brulait sensement; jamais ses galanteries ne firent ombrage aux citoyens, parcequ'elles n'influèrent en rien sur sa conduite publique. Sa vie grave, et sa vie badine, étaient tellement séparées, qu'on eût dit qu'il y avait deux hommes en lui..

Tenhove, Mem. Geneal. de la Maison de Medicis, liv. xi. *p.* 143.

[i] In the poem of Brandolini, *De laudibus Laur. Med.* (*Appx. No.* L.) the attention of Lorenzo to the dictates of morality and decorum, as well in himself as others, is the particular subject of panegyrick, and that by a contemporary writer. Had the conduct of Lorenzo been notoriously licentious, such praise would have been the severest satire.

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poetical writings; and certain it is, that if the offspring of imagination and the effusions of poetry be allowed to decide, the grounds of his conviction may be found in almost every line. It may perhaps be observed that these pieces were chiefly the productions of his youth, before the restrictions of the marriage vow had suppressed the breathings of passion; but how shall we elude the inference which arises from the following lines?

Teco l' avessi il ciel donna congiunto
In matrimonio: ah che pria non venisti
Al mondo, o io non son più tardo giunto?

O that the marriage bond had join'd our fate,
Nor I been born too soon, nor thou too late!

Or from these, which are still more explicit.

Ma questo van pensiero a che soggiorno?
Se tu pur dianzi, ed io fui un tempo avanti,
Dal laccio conjugal legato intorno?

But why these thoughts irrelevant and vain!
If I, long since in Hymen's fetters tied,
Am doom'd to hear another call thee bride?

Nor

Nor must it be denied that this elegiack fragment, though incorrect and unfinished, is distinguished by that pathos and glow of expression which genuine passion can alone inspire[k]. If in this piece Lorenzo be amorous, in others he is licentious; and if we admit the production of a moment of levity, as the evidence of his feelings, the only regret that he experienced was from the reflection that he had, in the course of his past time, imprudently neglected so many opportunities of collecting the sweets that were strewn in his way[l]. But shall we venture to infer, that because Lorenzo wrote amorous verses, and amused himself with *jeux d' esprit*, his life was dissolute, and his conduct immoral? "As poetry is the flower of science," says Menage, "so there is not a single person of "education who has not composed, or at least "wished to compose verses; and as love is a "natural passion, and poetry is the language of "love, so there is no one who has written "verses who has not felt the effects of love." If

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[k] v. this piece, entitled *Elegia*, in the poems of Lorenzo, published in the third volume.

[l] See the piece entitled *La Confessione*, also printed among his poems in the third volume.

CHAP. VIII. If we judge with such severity, what will become of the numerous throng of poets who have thought it sufficient to allege in their justification, that if

Their verse was wanton, yet their lives were chaste?

or what shall we say to the extensive catalogue of learned ecclesiasticks, who have endeavoured to fill the void of celibacy, by composing verses on subjects of love[m]?

Children of Lorenzo.

Whatever may be thought of the conduct or the sentiments of Lorenzo on this head, it does not appear that he left any offspring of illicit love; but by his wife Clarice he had a numerous progeny, of which three sons and four daughters arrived at the age of maturity. Piero his eldest son was born on the fifteenth day of February 1471; Giovanni, on the eleventh day of December 1475; and Giuliano, his youngest, in 1478. Of these the first was distinguished by a series of misfortunes too justly merited, the two latter by an unusual degree of prosperity;

[m] For this catalogue, from Heliodorus bishop of Tricca in Thessaly, to M. Du Bois doctor in theology at Paris, the reader may consult the *Anti-Baillet* of M. Menage, written by him when upwards of seventy years of age; the most singular instance of industry, wit, vanity, and learning, that the annals of literature can produce.

rity; Giovanni having obtained the dignity of the Tiara, which he wore by the name of Leo X. and Giuliano having allied himself by marriage to the royal house of France, and obtained the title of duke of Nemours. CHAP. VIII.

His conduct towards them.

In no point of view does the character of this extraordinary man appear more engaging than in his affection towards his children, in his care of their education, and in his solicitude for their welfare. In their society he relaxed from his important occupations, and accustomed himself to share their pleasures and promote their amusements[n]. By what more certain means can a parent obtain that confidence so necessary to enable him to promote the happiness of his children? The office of an instructer of youth he

[n] —— "Si dilettasse d' huomini faceti e mordaci, "& di giuochi puerili, più che a tanto huomo non pareva "si convenisse; in modo che molte volte fu visto tra i "suoi figliuoli e figliuole, tra i loro trastulli mesco-"larsi." *Mac. Hist. lib.* viii. On this subject I must not omit the comment of the interesting and elegant Tenhove: "Est il un spectacle plus touchant, que celui "de voir un tel homme déposer le fardeau de la gloire "au sein de la nature? A des yeux non viciés Laurent "de' Medicis parait bien grande, et bien aimable, lorsqu'il "joue a croix et pile avec le petit duc de Nemours, ou "qu'il se roule a terre avec Leon X."

Tenh. Mem. Geneal. lib. xi. *p.* 142.

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he considered as of the highest importance. "If," says he, "we esteem those who contribute to the prosperity of the state, we ought "to place in the first rank the tutors of our "children, whose labours are to influence posterity, and on whose precepts and exertions "the dignity of our family, and of our country, "in a great measure depends°."

Politiano accompanies them to Pistoia.

Soon after the conspiracy of the Pazzi, when Lorenzo thought it expedient to remove his family to Pistoia, they were accompanied by Politiano, as the instructer of his sons, who gave frequent information to his patron of their situation, and the progress made in the education of his children. These confidential letters enable us to form a more accurate idea of the disposition of their author, than we can collect from any of his writings intended for publication. Restless, impatient of control, and conceiving all merit to be concentred in the acquisition of learning, he could brook no opposition to his authority.

° Si feræ partus suos diligunt, qua nos in liberos nostros indulgentia esse debemus? Et si omnes, qui civitati consulunt, cari nobis sunt, certe in primis liberorum institutores, quorum industria sempiternum tempus spectat, quorumque præceptis, consiliis, et virtute, retinebimus familiæ et reipublicæ dignitatem.

Laur. Med. ad Polit. ap. Fabr. v. i. *p.* 166.

authority. The intervention of Madonna Clarice, in the direction of her children, was in his judgment impertinent, because she was unlettered, and a woman. In one of his letters he earnestly requests that Lorenzo will delegate to him a more extensive power; whilst in another, written on the same day, he acknowledges that this request was made under the impulse of passion, and solicits indulgence for the infirmity of his temper. The subsequent eminence of his pupils renders these letters interesting[p]. What friend of literature can be indifferent to the infancy of Leo the Tenth? "Piero," says Politiano, "attends to his studies with tolerable "diligence. We daily make excursions through "the neighbourhood, we visit the gardens with "which this city abounds, and sometimes look "into the library of Maestro Zambino, where I "have found some good pieces, both in Greek "and Latin. Giovanni rides out on horseback, "and the people follow him in crowds." From Pistoia the family retired in the close of the year to Caffagiolo, where they passed the winter; from whence Politiano continued his correspondence with Lorenzo, and occasionally addressed

They remove to Caffagiolo.

[p] They are given, from the collection of Fabroni, in the Appendix, *No.* LIX.

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addressed himself to his mother, Madonna Lucretia, between whom and this eminent scholar there subsisted a friendly and confidential intercourse. These letters afford an additional proof of the querulousness of genius, and may serve to reconcile mediocrity to its placid insignificance[q]. "The only news I can send you," thus he writes to this lady, "is, that we have here "such continual rains, that it is impossible to "quit the house, and the exercises of the "country are changed for childish sports within "doors. Here I stand by the fire-side, in my "great coat and slippers, that you might take "me for the very figure of melancholy. Indeed "I am the same at all times; for I neither see, "nor hear, nor do any thing that gives me "pleasure, so much am I affected by the "thoughts of our calamities; sleeping and "waking they still continue to haunt me. Two "days since we were all rejoicing upon hearing "that the plague had ceased—now we are "depressed on being informed that some symptoms of it yet remain. Were we at Florence, "we should have some consolation, were it "only that of seeing Lorenzo when he returned "to his house; but here we are in continual "anxiety, and I, for my part, am half dead "with

[q] *v. App. No.* LX.

" with solitude and weariness. The plague and CHAP.
" the war are incessantly in my mind. I lament VIII.
" past misfortunes, and anticipate future evils;
" and I have no longer at my side my dear Ma-
" donna Lucretia, to whom I might unbosom
" my cares." Such is the melancholy strain in which Politiano addresses the mother of Lorenzo; but we seldom complain except to those we esteem; and this letter is a better evidence of the feelings of Politiano, than a volume of well-turned compliments.

Dissensions between Politiano and Madonna Clarice.

In conciliating the regard of Clarice, Politiano was not equally fortunate. Her interference with him in his office appeared to him as an unpardonable intrusion. " As for Giovanni," says he, " his mother employs him in reading
" the psalter, which I by no means commend.
" Whilst she declined interfering with him, it is
" astonishing how rapidly he improved, inso-
" much that he read without any assistance.
" There is nothing," he proceeds, " which I
" ask more earnestly of Heaven, than that I may
" be able to convince you of my fidelity, my
" diligence, and my patience, which I would
" prove even by my death. Many things, how-
" ever, I omit, that amidst your numerous avo-
" cations I may not add to your solicitude."
When Politiano wrote thus to his patron, it

is

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is not to be supposed that his conduct at Caffagiolo was distinguished by moderation or complacency. The dissensions between him and Madonna Clarice consequently increased, till at length the intemperance or the arrogance of Politiano afforded her a just pretext for compelling him to quit the house. By a letter from Clarice to her husband on this occasion, we are informed of the provocation which she received, and must confess that she had sufficient cause for the measures she adopted; for what woman can bear with patience the stings of ridicule[r]? "I shall be glad," says she, "to escape being "made the subject of a tale of Franco's, as "Luigi Pulci was; nor do I like that Messer "Agnolo should threaten that he would remain "in the house in spite of me. You remember "I told you, that if it was your will he should "stay, I was perfectly contented; and although "I have suffered infinite abuse from him, yet if it "be with your assent, I am satisfied. But I do "not believe it to be so." On this trying occasion, as on many others, Politiano experienced the indulgence and friendship of Lorenzo, who, seeing that a reconciliation between the contending

[r] The letter of Clarice to her husband is given in the Appendix, *No.* LXI.

ing parties was impracticable, allowed the banished scholar a residence in his house at Fiesole. No longer fretted by female opposition, or wearied with the monotonous task of inculcating learning, his mind soon recovered its natural tone; and the fruits of the leisure which he enjoyed yet appear in a beautiful Latin poem, inferiour in its kind only to the Georgicks of Virgil, and to which he gave the title of *Rusticus*. In the close of this poem, he thus expresses his gratitude to his constant benefactor:

Politiano retires to Fiesole, and writes his poem entitled *Rusticus*.

Talia FESULEO lentus meditabar in antro,
Rure sub urbano Medicum, qua mons sacer urbem
Mæoniam, longique volumina despicit ARNI.
Qua bonus hospitium felix, placidamque quietem
Indulget LAURENS, LAURENS haud ultima Phœbi
Gloria, jactatis LAURENS fida anchora musis;
Qui si certa magis permiserit otia nobis,
Afflabor majore Deo.——

Thus flow the strains, whilst here at ease reclin'd
At length the sweets of calm repose I find;
Where FESULE, with high impending brow,
O'erlooks Mæonian FLORENCE stretch'd below;
Whilst ARNO, winding through the mild domain,
Leads in repeated folds his lengthen'd train.
Nor thou thy poet's grateful strain refuse,
Lorenzo! sure resource of every muse;
Whose praise, so thou his leisure hour prolong,
Shall claim the tribute of a nobler song.

Were

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Piero de' Medici.

Were we to give implicit credit to the testimony of his tutor, Piero de' Medici united in himself all the great qualities by which his progenitors had been successively distinguished: "The talents of his father, the virtues of his "grandfather, and the prudence of the venerable "Cosmo[s]." Lorenzo himself had certainly formed a favourable opinion of his capacity, and is said to have remarked that his eldest son would be distinguished for ability, his second for probity, his third by an amiable temper[t]. The fondness of a parent was gratified in observing those instances of an extraordinary memory, which Piero displayed in his childhood, and in listening to the poetical pieces which he was accustomed to recite to the familiar circle of friends, who perhaps admired, and certainly applauded his efforts. Among these were some of the whimsical productions of Matteo Franco.

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[s] Scis autem quam gratus multitudini sit et civibus, Petrus noster, non minus jam sua, quam familiæ gloria; scilicet in quo Patris ingenium, Patrui virtus, Patrui magni humanitas, Avi probitas, Proavi prudentia, pietas Abavi reviviscit: omnium vero majorum suorum liberalitas, omniumque animus.

Pol. Ep. lib. xii. *Ep.* 6.

[t] *Valori in vitâ Laur. p.* 64.

Franco[u]. As he advanced in years, his father was desirous that he should always participate in the conversation of those eminent scholars who frequented the palace of the Medici; and it was with pleasure that Lorenzo saw the mutual attachment that subsisted between his son and the professors of literature in general[v]. The celebrated

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[u] Quin idem parens tuus, penè infantem adhuc te, quaedam ex his (Franci carminibus) facetiora, ridiculi gratia docebat, quæ tu deinde inter adductos amicos balbutiebas, et eleganti quodam gestu, qui quidem illam deceret aetatulam, commendabas.

Pol. Ep. ad Pet. Med. lib. x. *Ep.* 12.

[v] Landino, in his dedication of the works of Virgil to Piero de' Medici, thus adverts to the attention of Lorenzo to the education of his children, and particularly of Piero: "Plurima sunt quæ in illo (Laurentio) admirer; "sed illud præ ceteris, quod in liberis educandis indul- "gentioris quidem parentis numquam, optimi vero ac "sapientissimi semper, summa sedulitate officium com- "pleverit. Id te vero informando, atque erudiendo, "quid umquam omisit? Nam quamvis ipse per se "quotidie admoneret, præciperet, ac juberet, tamen "cum sciret quanti esset, ne a Præceptoris latere "umquam discederes, ex omni hominum doctorum "copia, Angelum Politianum elegit, virum multa ac "varia doctrina eruditum, Poetam vero egregium, "egregiumque Oratorem, ac denique totius antiquitatis "diligentem perscrutatorem, cui puerilem ætatem tuam "et

CHAP. VIII. celebrated epistles of Politiano, which were collected by their author at the instance of Piero, and to whom they are inscribed in terms of grateful affection, bear ample testimony to his acquirements; and the frequent mention made of his name by the learned correspondents of Politiano, is a convincing proof of his attention to their interests, and his attachment to the cause of letters. Happy if the day that opened with such promising appearances had not been so suddenly over-clouded;

——— *Sed zephyri spes fortavere paternas.*

and Piero, by one inconsiderate step, which his subsequent efforts could never retrieve, rendered ineffectual all the solicitude of his father, and all the lessons of his youth.

Giovanni de' Medici.

Giovanni, the second son of Lorenzo, was destined from his infancy to the church. Early brought forward into publick view, and strongly impressed with a sense of the necessity of a grave deportment, he seems never to have been a child. At seven years of age he was admitted into holy orders,

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"et optimis moribus fingendam, et optimis artibus "ac disciplinis excolendam, traderet."

Band. Spec. Lit. Flor. v. i. *p.* 222. *in not.*

orders, and received the tonsura from Gentile, bishop of Arezzo. From thenceforth he was called Messer Giovanni, and was soon afterwards declared capable of ecclesiastical preferment. Before he was eight years of age he was appointed by Louis XI. of France, abbot of Fonte Dolce, which was immediately succeeded by a presentation from the same patron, to the archbishoprick of Aix in Provence; but in this instance the liberality of the king was opposed by an invincible objection, for before the investiture could be obtained from the pope, information was received at Florence that the archbishop was yet living. This disappointment was however compensated by the abbacy of the rich monastery of Pasignano [w]. Of the glaring indecorum of bestowing spiritual functions on a child, Lorenzo was fully sensible, and he accordingly endeavoured to counteract the unfavourable impression which it might make on the publick mind, by inculcating upon his son the strictest attention to his manners, his morals, and his improvement. He had too much sagacity

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[w] These particulars are circumstantially related in the Ricordi of Lorenzo, who seems to have interested himself in the early promotion of his son with uncommon earnestness. *v. Appx. No.* LXII.

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city not to be convinced, that the surest method of obtaining the rewards of merit is to deserve them; and Messer Giovanni was not more distinguished from his youthful associates by the high promotions which he enjoyed, than he was by his attention to his studies, his strict performance of the duties enjoined him, and his inviolable regard to truth.

Lorenzo discharges his debts and quits commerce for agriculture.

In providing for the expenses of the wars in which the Florentines had been engaged, considerable debts had been incurred; and as they had not yet learned the destructive expedient of anticipating their future revenue, or transferring their own burthens to their posterity, it became necessary to provide for the payment of these demands. Besides the debts contracted in the name of the republick, Lorenzo had been obliged to have recourse to his agents in different countries to borrow large sums of money, which had been applied to the exigencies of the state; but it was no improbable conjecture, that the money which had been lavishly expended during the heat of the contest would be repaid with reluctance when the struggle was over. These considerations occasioned him great anxiety; for whilst on the one hand he dreaded the disgrace of being wanting in the performance of his pecuniary engagements, he was

was not perhaps less apprehensive, on the other hand, of diminishing his influence in Florence, by the imposition of additional taxes. From this difficulty he saw no possibility of extricating himself, but by the most rigid attention, as well to the improvement of the publick revenue, as to the state of his own concerns. The increasing prosperity of the city of Florence seconded his efforts, and in a short time the creditors of the state were fully reimbursed, without any increase of the publick burthens. His own engagements yet remained incomplete; but whilst he was endeavouring, from his large property and extensive concerns, to discharge the demands against him, a decree providing for the payment of his debts out of the publick treasury relieved him from his difficulties, and proved that the affection of his fellow-citizens yet remained unimpaired[x]. Lorenzo did not however receive this mark of esteem, without bitterly exclaiming against the negligence and imprudence of his factors and correspondents, who, by their inattention to his affairs, had reduced him to the necessity of accepting such a favour. From this period he determined to close

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[x] *Valori in vitâ Laur. p.* 38.

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close his mercantile concerns with all possible expedition, well considering, that besides the inherent uncertainty of these transactions, the success of them depended too much on the industry and integrity of others. He therefore resolved to turn his attention to occupations more particularly under his own inspection, and to relinquish the fluctuating advantages of commerce, for the more certain revenue derived from the cultivation of his rich farms and extensive possessions in different parts of Tuscany.

Villa of Poggio-Cajano.

His villa of Poggio-Cajano was, in his intervals of leisure, his favourite residence. Here he erected a magnificent mansion[y], and formed the complete establishment of a princely farmer. Of this fertile domain, and of the labours of Lorenzo in its cultivation and improvement, one of his contemporaries has left a very particular

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[y] ——— Medicum quid tecta superba,
Carregi, et Trebii: Fesulana aut condita rupe
Commemorem? jures Luculli tecta superba:
Quæque sine exemplo *Cajana* palatia *Laurens*
Aedificat, quorum scandet fastigia, tanquam
Per planum iret eques, partesque equitabit in omnes.
Ug. Verini de illust. Urb. lib. ii.

cular and authentick description[z]. "The village of Cajano," says he, "is built on the easy slope of a hill, and is at the distance of about ten miles from Florence. The road to it from the city is very spacious, and excellent even in winter, and is in every respect suitable for all kinds of carriages. The river Ombrone winds round it with a smooth deep stream, affording great plenty of fish. The villa of Lorenzo is denominated *Ambra*, either from the name of the river, or on account of its extraordinary beauty. His fields are occasionally refreshed with streams of fine and wholesome water, which Lorenzo, with that magnificence which characterizes all his undertakings, has conveyed by an aqueduct over mountains and precipices for many miles[a]. The house is not

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[z] *Mic. Verini Ep.* xvi. *ap. Band. Cat. Bib. Laur. v.* iii. *p.* 483.

[a] This aqueduct is frequently celebrated in the poems of Politiano.

In fontem Laurentii Medicis Ambram.

"Ut lasciva suo furtim daret oscula Lauro,
"Ipsa sibi occultas repperit Ambra vias."

And again

In eumdem.

"Traxit amatrices hæc usque ad limina Nymphas,
"Dum jactat Laurum sæpius Ambra suum."

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Macte opibus, macte ingenio, mea gloria LAURENS,
Gloria musarum LAURENS! montesque propinquos
Perfodis, et longo suspensos excipis arcu,
Prægelidas ducturus aquas, qua prata supinum
Lata videt podium, riguis uberrima lymphis;
Aggere tuta novo, piscosisque undique septa
Limitibus, per quæ multo servante molosso
Plena Tarentinis succrescunt ubera vaccis;
Atque aliud nigris missum (quis credat) ab Indis,
Ruminat ignotas armentum discolor herbas.
At vituli tepidis clausi fœnilibus intus,
Expectant tota sugendas nocte parentes.
Interea magnis lac densum bullit ahenis,
Brachiaque exertus senior, tunicataque pubes
Comprimit, et longa siccandum ponit in umbra.
Utque piæ pascuntur oves, ita vastus obeso
Corpore, sus calaber cavea stat clausus olenti,
Atque aliam ex alia poscit grunnitibus escam.
Celtiber ecce sibi latebrosa cuniculus antra
Perforat; innumerus net seriça vellera bombyx;
At vaga floriferos errant dispersa per hortos,
Multiforumque replent operosa examina suber;
Et genus omne avium captivis instrepit alis.
Dumque Antenorei volucris cristata Timavi
Parturit, et custos capitoli gramina tondet,
Multa lacu se mersat anas, subitaque volantes
Nube diem fuscant Veneris tutela columbæ.

Go

"Ambram ipsam Cajanam, prædium (ut ita dixerim)
"omniferum, quasi pro laxamento sibi delegit civilium
"laborum. Tibi ergo poemation hoc qualecunque est,
"nuncupamus," &c. Pridie nonas Nov. MCCCCLXXXV.

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Go on, Lorenzo, thou the muse's pride,
Pierce the hard rock and scoop the mountain's side;
The distant streams shall hear thy potent call,
And the proud arch receive them as they fall.
Thence o'er thy fields the genial waters lead,
That with luxuriant verdure crown the mead.
There rise thy mounds th' opposing flood that ward,
There thy domains thy faithful mastives guard.
Tarentum there her horned cattle sends,
Whose swelling teats the milky rill distends;
There India's breed of various colours range,
Pleas'd with the novel scene and pastures strange,
Whilst nightly clos'd within their shelter'd stall
For the due treat their lowing offspring call.
Mean time the milk in spacious coppers boils,
With arms unstript the elder rustick toils,
The young assist the curdled mass to squeeze,
And place in cooling shades the recent cheese.
Wide o'er thy downs extends thy fleecy charge;
There the Calabrian hog obese and large,
Loud from his sty demands his constant food;
And Spain supplies thee with thy rabbit brood.
Where mulberry groves their length of shadow spread,
Secure the silkworm spins his lustrous thread;
And cull'd from every flower the plunderer meets,
The bee regales thee with her rifled sweets.
There birds of various plume, and various note,
Flutter their captive wings; with cackling throat
The Paduan fowl betrays her future breed,
And there the geese, once Rome's preservers, feed,
And ducks amusive sport amidst thy floods,
And doves, the pride of Venus, throng thy woods.

When

CHAP. VIII. Careggi.

When Lorenzo was prevented, by his numerous avocations, from enjoying his retreat at Poggio-Cajano, his other villas in the vicinity of Florence afforded him an opportunity of devoting to his own use, or the society of his friends, those shorter intervals of time which he could withdraw from the service of the publick. His residence at Careggi was in every respect suitable to his rank. The house, which was erected by his grandfather, and enlarged by his father, was sufficiently commodious. The adjacent grounds, which possessed every natural advantage that wood and water could afford, were improved and planted under his own directions[d], and his gardens were provided with every

[d] These particulars are adverted to in the following lines of Francesco Camerlini:

Allusio in Villam Caregium Laurentii Medicis.

Caregium gratæ charites habitare feruntur,
Gratus ager, chari gratior umbra loci.
Cosmus honos, patriæque pater construxerat aedes,
Disposuitque emptos ordine primus agros.
Degener haud tanto natus Petrus inde parenti,
Curavit partes amplificare suas.
Vixque tibi, Laurens, in tanta mole reliquit
Quod peragas, nisi quod maxima semper agis.
Tu dignos Faunis lucos, fontesque Napaeis
Struxisti, et deceant quæ modo rura Deos.

Band. Cat. Bib. Laur. v. iii. *p.* 545.

every vegetable, either for ornament or use, which the most diligent research could supply[e]. But Fiesole seems to have been the general resort of his literary friends, to many of whom he allotted habitations in the neighbourhood, during the amenity of the summer months. Of these Politiano and Pico were the most constant, and perhaps the most welcome guests. Landino, Scala, and Ficino were also frequent in their visits; and Crinitus, the pupil of Politiano, and Marullus, his rival in letters and in love, were occasionally admitted to this select society[f]. "Superiour perhaps," says Voltaire, (substi-

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Fiesole.

[e] This was perhaps one of the earliest collections of plants in Europe, which deserves the name of a Botanical Garden; the authority of Sabbati, who dates the commencement of that at Rome in the pontificate of Nicholas V. about the year 1450, being rejected by our eminent botanist Dr. Smith, who gives the priority to that of Padua in 1533. *v. Sabb. Hort. Rom. v.* i. *fl.* 1. *Dr. Smith's Introduct. Discourse to the Transactions of the Linn. Soc. fl.* 8. Of the garden of Lorenzo a very particular account is given by Alessandro Braccio, in a Latin poem addressed to Bernardo Bembo, and preserved in the Laurentian Library, *Plut.* lxxxxi. *sup. cod.* 41. *Band. Cat. v.* iii. *fl.* 787; from which catalogue I shall insert it in the Appendix, *No.* LXIII.

[f] Petrus Crinitus (or Piero de' Ricci) thus addresses Marullus:

Nuper

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(substituting, however, Lascar and Chalcondyles for Scala and Crinitus), "to that of the boasted "sages of Greece." Of the beauties of this place, and of the friendly intercourse that subsisted among these eminent men, Politiano, in a letter to Ficino, gives us some idea[g]. "When "you are incommoded," says he, "with the "heat of the season in your retreat at Careggi, "you will perhaps think the shelter of Fiesole "not undeserving your notice. Seated between "the sloping sides of the mountain, we have "here water in abundance, and being constantly "refreshed with moderate winds, find little "inconvenience from the glare of the sun. As "you approach the house it seems imbosomed "in the wood; but when you reach it, you find "it commands a full prospect of the city. "Populous

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Nuper Fæsuleis (ut soleo) jugis,
Mentem Lesbiaco carmine molliter
Solari libuit: mox teneram chelyn,
Myrto sub virido deposui, et gradum,
Placuit ad urbem flectere,
Qua noster *Medices* pieridum Parens
Marulle, hospitium dulce tibi exhibet,
Ac te perpetuis muneribus fovens,
Phœbum non patitur tela resumere,
Laurens Camœnarum decus.

Crin. opt. Lugd. 1554. *p.* 553.

[g] *Pol. Ep. lib.* x. *Ep.* 14.

"Populous as the vicinity is, yet I can here "enjoy that solitude so gratifying to my disposition. But I shall tempt you with other "allurements. Wandering beyond the limits "of his own plantation, Pico sometimes steals "unexpectedly on my retirement, and draws "me from my shades to partake of his supper. "What kind of supper that is you well know; "sparing indeed, but neat, and rendered grateful by the charms of his conversation. Be "you, however my guest. Your supper here "shall be as good, and your wine perhaps "better; for in the quality of my wine I shall "contend for superiority even with Pico himself."

Other domains.

Besides his places of residence before noticed, Lorenzo had large possessions in different parts of Tuscany. His house at Caffagiolo, near the village of that name among the romantick scenes of the Appenines, had been the favourite residence of his grandfather Cosmo; who, on being asked why he preferred this place to his more convenient habitation at Fiesole, is said to have assigned as a reason, that Caffagiolo seemed pleasanter, because all the country he could see from his windows was his own. At Agnana in the territory of Pisa, Lorenzo had a fertile domain, which he improved by draining and

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and bringing into cultivation the extensive marshes that lay in its neighbourhood, the completion of which was only prevented by his death[h]. Another estate in the district of Volterra was rendered extremely fruitful by his labours, and yielded him an ample revenue. Valori relates, that Lorenzo was highly gratified with the amusement of horseracing, and that he kept many horses for this purpose, amongst which was a roan, that on every occasion bore away the prize. The same author professes to have heard from Politiano, that as often as this horse happened to be sick, or was wearied with the course, he refused any nourishment except from the hands of Lorenzo, at whose approach he testified his pleasure by neighing and by motions of his body, even whilst lying on the ground; so that it is not to be wondered at, says this author, by a kind of commendation rather more striking than just, that Lorenzo should be the delight of mankind, when even the brute creation expressed an affection for him[i].

In

[h] *Valor. in vitâ Laur. p.* 39.

[i] Delectabatur maxime equorum cursu. Quare equos plurimos habuit in delitiis, in quibus ille fuit, quem

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In the year 1484, at which time Piero de' Medici, the eldest son of Lorenzo, was about fourteen years of age, his father judged it expedient to send him to Rome on a visit to the pope, and appointed Scala and Politiano as his companions. He did not however implicitly confide in their discretion, but drew up himself very full and explicit directions for the conduct of his son during his absence. These instructions yet remain, and may serve, as much as any circumstance whatever, to give us an idea of the sagacity and penetration of Lorenzo, and of his attention, not only to the regulation of the manners of his son, but to the promotion of his own views[k]. He advises him to speak naturally, without

Piero de' Medici visits the pope.

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quem de colore morellum appellabant, tantae pernicitatis, ut ex omnibus certaminibus victoriam semper reportaverit. De hoc equo ipse a Politiano audivi, quod mirum legentibus videatur, non tamen novum, eum, quoties vel aegrotaret, vel defessus esset, nisi a Laurentio oblatum cibum omnem fastidire solitum, et quotiescumque ille accederet, motu corporis, et hinnitu, quamvis humi prostratum, animi laetitiam fuisse testatum, ut non jam mirum sit tantopere hominibus gratum, quem etiam ferae dilexerint. *Valor. in vitâ, p.* 49.

[k] This curious paper of private instructions from Lorenzo to his son yet remains, and is given in the Appendix, from the collection of Fabroni (*No.* LXIV.)

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without affectation, not to be anxious to display his learning, to use expressions of civility, and to address himself with seriousness, and yet with ease to all. On his arrival at Rome, he cautions him not to take precedence of his countrymen who are his superiours in age; "for "though you are my son," says he, "you will "remember that you are only a citizen of Flo-"rence like themselves." He suggests to him what topicks it will be proper for him to dwell upon in his interview with the pope; and directs him to express, in the most explicit manner, the devotion of his father to the holy see. He then proceeds to the essential object of his mission. "After having thus recommended me to "his holiness, you will inform him, that your "affection for your brother induces you to speak "a word in his favour. You can here mention "that I have educated him for the priesthood, "and shall closely attend to his learning and "his manners, so that he may not disgrace his "profession. That in this respect I repose all "my hopes on his holiness; who, having already "given us proofs of his kindness and affection, "will add to our obligations by any promotion "which he may think proper to bestow upon "him. Endeavouring by these and similar "expressions to recommend your brother to "his favour as much as lies in your power."

In

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Giovanni de' Medici raised to the dignity of a cardinal.

In whatever manner Piero acquitted himself on his youthful embassy, it is probable that this interview accomplished the object on which the future fortunes of his house were so materially to depend; and Giovanni de' Medici, when only thirteen years of age, ranked with the prime supporters of the Roman church. It seems, however, that although the pope had complied with the pressing instances of Lorenzo, in bestowing on his son the dignity of a cardinal, he was not insensible of the indecorum of such a measure, for he expressly prohibited him from assuming the insignia of his rank for three years, requesting that he would apply that interval to the diligent prosecution of his studies. He accordingly went to Pisa, where the regularity of his conduct, and his attention to his improvement, justified in some degree the extraordinary indulgence which he had experienced, in consequence of which his father made the most pressing instances to the pope to shorten the term of his probation. "Trust the ma-
"nagement of this business to me," said Inno-
"cent; "I have heard of his good conduct, and
"of the honours which he has obtained in his
"college disputes. I consider him as my own
"son, and shall, when it is least expected,
"order his promotion to be made publick;
"besides which, it is my intention to do much
"more

CHAP. VIII. "more for his advancement than is at present "supposed." The three years were, however, suffered to elapse, and the young cardinal was then admitted to all the honours of his rank, the investiture having been performed by Matteo Bosso, prior of the monastery at Fiesole, who has left, in one of his letters, a particular narrative of the ceremony[1]. After passing a few days with his father at Florence, Giovanni hastened to Rome to pay his respects to the pope. On his approach to that city he was met and congratulated by several other cardinals, who made no hesitation in receiving into their number so young an associate. By the seriousness and propriety of his demeanour, he obviated as much as possible the unfavourable impression which a promotion so unprecedented had made on the publick mind. Soon after his arrival at Rome, his father addressed to him an admonitory letter, as conspicuous for sound sense as for paternal affection; but which discovers the deep policy of Lorenzo, and the great extent of his views. This letter may, without any unreasonable assumption, be considered as the guide of the future life and fortunes of a son, who afterwards

[1] *Recuperationes Fesulanæ Ep.* CX. As the work does not frequently occur, I shall give this letter in the Appendix, No. LXV.

afterwards attained the highest rank in Christendom, and supported it with a dignity which gave it new lustre[m]. CHAP. VIII.

Lorenzo de' Medici,

To Giovanni de' Medici, Cardinal.

Admonitory Letter of Lorenzo.

"You, and all of us who are interested in "your welfare, ought to esteem ourselves highly "favoured by Providence, not only for the "many honours and benefits bestowed on our "house, but more particularly for having con- "ferred upon us, in your person, the greatest "dignity we have ever enjoyed. This favour, "in itself so important, is rendered still more so "by the circumstances with which it is accom- "panied, and especially by the consideration of "your youth, and of our situation in the world. "The first thing that I would therefore suggest "to you is, that you ought to be grateful to "God

[m] The original will be found in the Appendix, No. LXVI. "Hæc epistolâ," says Fabroni, "tanquam "Cycnea fuit prudentissimi hominis vox et oratio; paulo "enim post ille mortem obivit."

Fabr. in vitâ, ii. 313.

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" God, and continually to recollect that it is not " through your merits, your prudence, or your " solicitude, that this event has taken place, " but through his favour, which you can only " repay by a pious, chaste, and exemplary life; " and that your obligations to the performance " of these duties are so much the greater, as in " your early years you have given some reason- " able expectation that your riper age may pro- " duce such fruits. It would indeed be highly " disgraceful, and as contrary to your duty as to " my hopes, if at a time when others display a " greater share of reason, and adopt a better " mode of life, you should forget the precepts of " your youth, and forsake the path in which you " have hitherto trodden. Endeavour therefore " to alleviate the burthen of your early dignity, " by the regularity of your life, and by your " perseverance in those studies which are suit- " able to your profession. It gave me great " satisfaction to learn, that, in the course of the " past year, you had frequently, of your own " accord, gone to communion and confession; " nor do I conceive that there is any better way " of obtaining the favour of heaven, than by " habituating yourself to a performance of these " and similar duties. This appears to me to be " the most suitable and useful advice which, in " the first instance, I can possibly give you.

" I well

" I well know, that as you are now to reside " at Rome, that sink of all iniquity, the difficulty " of conducting yourself by these admonitions " will be increased. The influence of example " is itself prevalent; but you will probably meet " with those who will particularly endeavour to " corrupt and incite you to vice; because, as " you may yourself perceive, your early attain- " ment to so great a dignity is not observed " without envy, and those who could not pre- " vent your receiving that honour, will secretly " endeavour to diminish it, by inducing you to " forfeit the good estimation of the publick; " thereby precipitating you into that gulf into " which they had themselves fallen; in which " attempt the consideration of your youth will " give them a confidence of success. To these " difficulties you ought to oppose yourself with " the greater firmness, as there is at present less " virtue amongst your brethren of the college. " I acknowledge indeed that several of them are " good and learned men, whose lives are exem- " plary, and whom I would recommend to you " as patterns of your conduct. By emulating " them you will be so much the more known " and esteemed, in proportion as your age, and " the peculiarity of your situation, will distin- " guish you from your colleagues. Avoid, " however, as you would Scylla or Charibdis,

" the

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" the imputation of hypocrisy; guard against
" all ostentation, either in your conduct or
" your discourse; affect not austerity, nor even
" appear too serious. This advice you will, I
" hope, in time understand and practise better
" than I can express it.

" You are not unacquainted with the great
" importance of the character which you have
" to sustain, for you well know that all the
" Christian world would prosper if the cardinals
" were what they ought to be; because in such
" a case there would always be a good pope,
" upon which the tranquillity of Christendom
" so materially depends. Endeavour then to
" render youself such, that if all the rest resem-
" bled you, we might expect this universal bles-
" sing. To give you particular directions as to
" your behaviour and conversation would be a
" matter of no small difficulty. I shall there-
" fore only recommend, that in your intercourse
" with the cardinals, and other men of rank,
" your language be unassuming and respectful,
" guiding yourself, however, by your own rea-
" son, and not submitting to be impelled by the
" passions of others, who, actuated by improper
" motives, may pervert the use of their reason.
" Let it satisfy your conscience that your con-
" versation is without intentional offence; and

" if,

" if, through impetuosity of temper, any one CHAP. VIII.
" should be offended, as his enmity is without
" just cause, so it will not be very lasting. On
" this your first visit to Rome, it will however
" be more advisable for you to listen to others
" than to speak much yourself.

" You are now devoted to God and the
" church; on which account you ought to aim
" at being a good ecclesiastick, and to show that
" you prefer the honour and state of the church,
" and of the apostolick see, to every other consi-
" deration. Nor, while you keep this in view,
" will it be difficult for you to favour your
" family and your native place. On the con-
" trary, you should be the link to bind this city
" closer to the church, and our family with the
" city; and although it be impossible to foresee
" what accidents may happen, yet I doubt not
" but this may be done with equal advantage
" to all; observing, however, that you are
" always to prefer the interests of the church.

" You are not only the youngest cardinal in
" the college, but the youngest person that
" ever was raised to that rank; and you ought
" therefore to be the most vigilant and unassum-
" ing, not giving others occasion to wait for you
" either in the chapel, the consistory, or upon
" deputations.

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" deputations. You will soon get a sufficient
" insight into the manners of your brethren.
" With those of less respectable character,
" converse not with too much intimacy; not
" merely on account of the circumstance in
" itself, but for the sake of publick opinion.
" Converse on general topicks with all. On
" publick occasions let your equipage and dress
" be rather below than above mediocrity. A
" handsome house and a well-ordered family
" will be preferable to a great retinue and a
" splendid residence. Endeavour to live with
" regularity, and gradually to bring your ex-
" penses within those bounds which in a new
" establishment cannot perhaps be expected.
" Silk and jewels are not suitable for persons in
" your station. Your taste will be better shown
" in the acquisition of a few elegant remains of
" antiquity, or in the collecting of handsome
" books, and by your attendants being learned
" and well-bred rather than numerous. Invite
" others to your house oftener than you receive
" invitations. Practise neither too frequently.
" Let your own food be plain and take sufficient
" exercise, for those who wear your habit are
" soon liable, without great caution, to contract
" infirmities. The station of a cardinal is not
" less secure than elevated; on which account
" those who arrive at it, too frequently become
" negligent,

" negligent, conceiving that their object is at- CHAP.
" tained, and that they can preserve it with VIII.
" little trouble. This idea is often injurious to
" the life and character of those who entertain
" it. Be attentive therefore to your conduct,
" and confide in others too little rather than too
" much. There is one rule which I would
" recommend to your attention in preference to
" all others: Rise early in the morning. This
" will not only contribute to your health, but
" will enable you to arrange and expedite the
" business of the day; and as there are various
" duties incident to your station, such as the
" performance of divine service, studying, giving
" audience, &c. you will find the observance of
" this admonition productive of the greatest
" utility. Another very necessary precaution,
" particularly on your entrance into publick life,
" is to deliberate every evening on what you
" have to perform the following day, that you
" may not be unprepared for whatever may
" happen. With respect to your speaking in
" the consistory, it will be most becoming for
" you at present to refer the matters in debate
" to the judgment of his holiness, alleging as a
" reason your own youth and inexperience.
" You will probably be desired to intercede for
" the favours of the pope on particular occa-
" sions.

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" sions. Be cautious however that you trou-
" ble him not too often; for his temper leads
" him to be most liberal to those who weary
" him least with their solicitations. This you
" must observe, lest you should give him offence,
" remembering also at times to converse with
" him on more agreeable topicks; and if you
" should be obliged to request some kindness
" from him, let it be done with that modesty
" and humility which are so pleasing to his
" disposition. Farewell."

Piero de' Medici marries Alfonsina Orsini.

As the policy of Lorenzo led him to support a powerful influence at Rome, and as he had frequently experienced the good effects of the connexion which subsisted between him and the family of the Orsini, he thought it advisable to strengthen it; and accordingly proposed a marriage between his son Piero, and Alfonsina, the daughter of Roberto Orsini, count of Tagliacozzo and Albi. This proposal was eagerly listened to by Virginio Orsini, who was then considered as the head of that powerful family, the chiefs of which, though subordinate to the pope, scarcely considered themselves as subjects, and frequently acted with the independence of sovereign princes. In the month of March 1487, these nuptials were celebrated at Naples, in the presence

presence of the king and his court, with extraordinary pomp[n]. Lorenzo, on his marriage with Clarice Orsini, had received no portion; but the reputation which he had now acquired was more than an equivalent for the pride of ancestry, and Virginio agreed to pay 12,000 Neapolitan ducats as a portion with his niece[o]. On this occasion Piero was accompanied by Bernardo Rucellai, who had married Nannina, one of the sisters of Lorenzo, and who has not only signalized himself as a protector of learned men, but was himself one of the most accomplished scholars of his time[p]. CHAP. VIII.

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[n] Si fece lo sposalitio in Castello, nella Sala grande, presente il Re e tutta la Corte, con gran cena e festa. Il Re non potea fare maggiori dimostrazioni verso el Sig. Virginio. *Bern. Oricellarii Ep. ap. Fabr. v.* ii. *p.* 316.

[o] *Extant in Filz.* 1. I capitoli di matrimonio tra l' Alfonsina de Ursinis figlia del quondam Roberto de Ursinis conte di Tagliacozzo e d' Albi, e Piero de' Medici, comparente Virginio de Ursinis fratel consobrino. Dos fuit Ducatorum Neapolitanorum 12,000.

Fabr. ut sup.

[p] The talents and acquirements of Rucellai justly entitled him to the honour of so near an alliance with the family of the Medici. His publick life has indeed incurred the censure of the Florentine historians of the succeeding century,

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The marriage of Piero de' Medici was soon afterwards followed by that of his sister Maddalena with Francesco Cibo, the son of the pope, and who then bore the title of count of Anguillara.

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century, who wrote under the pressure of a despotick government: but it is not difficult to perceive that his crime was an ardent love of liberty, which he preferred to the claims of kindred, and the expectations of personal aggrandizement. *Ammir. Opusc. vol.* ii. *Elog.* ii. 161. *Comment. di Nerli. p.* 64. His Latin historical works, "*De Bello Italico*," and "*De Bello Pisano*," have merited the approbation of the discriminating Erasmus. "Novi "Venetiæ," says he, "Bernardum Ocricularium (Ori-"cellarium) cujus Historias si legisses, dixisses alterum "*Sallustium*, aut certe Sallustii temporibus scriptas." *Apotheg. lib.* viii. The former of these works was first published at London by Brindley in 1724, and again by William Bowyer, with the treatise *de Bello Pisano* in 1733. Bernardo was also a poet, and appears in the *Canti Carnascialeschi* as the author of the *Trionfo della Calunnia*. *Cant. Carnas. p.* 125. But the poetical reputation of Bernardo is eclipsed by that of his son Giovanni Rucellai, author of the tragedy of *Rosmunda*, and of that beautiful didactick poem *Le Api*, which will remain a lasting monument that the Italian language requires not the shackles of rhyme to render it harmonious. "Homme "de Gout (says Tenhove) dans vos promenades solitaires "prenez quelquefois son poeme.

"Ed odi quel che sopra un verde prato,
"Cinto d' abeti e d' onorati allori,
"Che bagna or un muscoso e chiaro fonte,
"Canta de l' api del suo florid' orto."

lara[q]. Of the three other daughters of Lorenzo, Lucretia intermarried with Giacopo Salviati[r], Contessina with Piero Ridolfi, and Louisa, his youngest, after having been betrothed to Giovanni de' Medici, of a collateral branch of the same family, died before the time appointed for the nuptials[s]. CHAP. VIII.

In

[q] These nuptials were celebrated at Rome in the year 1488. Maddalena, who was very young, was accompanied by Matteo Franco, the facetious correspondent of Pulci (*vol.* I. *p.* 337.), the vivacity of whose character did not prevent Lorenzo from selecting him for this important trust, in the execution of which he conciliated in a high degree the favour of the pope, and his courtiers. *Pol. Ep. lib.* X. *Ep.* 12.

[r] *Vide vol.* I. *p.* 276.

[s] Besides his three sons and four daughters before enumerated, Lorenzo had other children, all of whom died in their infancy, as appears by a letter from him to Politiano; who having occasion to acquaint him with the indisposition of some part of his family, and being fearful of alarming him, addressed his letter to Michellozzi, the secretary of Lorenzo. In his answer, Lorenzo reproves, with some degree of seriousness, the ill-timed distrust of Politiano, and with true stoical dignity declares that it gave him more uneasiness than the intelligence that accompanied it. "Can you then conceive," says he, "that my temper is so infirm, as to be disturbed by "such an event? If my disposition had been by nature "weak, and liable to be impelled by every gust, yet "experience

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Piero de' Medici visits Milan.

In the year 1488, Piero de' Medici took a journey to Milan, to be present at the celebration of the nuptials of the young duke Galeazzo Sforza, with Isabella, grand-daughter of Ferdinand, king of Naples. The whole expense of this journey was defrayed by Lodovico Sforza, who paid a marked respect to Piero, and directed that he should always appear in publick at the side of the duke. By a letter yet existing, from the Florentine legate to Lorenzo de' Medici, it appears that these nuptials were celebrated with great magnificence[t]; but amidst the splendour of diamonds and the glitter of brocade, were intwined the serpents of treachery and of guilt. Even in giving the hand of Isabella to a nephew, whom he regarded rather as an implement of his ambition than as his lawful sovereign, Lodovico himself burnt with a criminal passion for her; and the gravest of

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"experience has taught me how to brave the storm. I "have not only known what it is to bear the sickness, "but even the death of some of my children. The "untimely loss of my father, when I was in my twenty-"first year, left me so much exposed to the attacks of "fortune, that life became a burthen to me. You ought "therefore to have known that if nature had denied me "firmness, experience has supplied the defect."

Laur. Ep. in Ep. Pol. lib. x. *Ep.* 5.

[t] *v. App. No.* LXVII.

of the Italian historians assures us, that it was the publick opinion, that he had, by means of magick and incantations, prevented the consummation of a marriage, which, while it promoted his political views, deprived him of the object of his love[u]. The prejudices of the age, and the wickedness of Lodovico, sufficiently countenance the probability of such an attempt; but that the means employed were so far successful as to prevent that circumstance taking place for several months, is an assertion, of the veracity of which posterity may be allowed to doubt. CHAP. VIII.

Of this princess an incident is recorded, which does equal honour to her conjugal affection and her filial piety[v]. When Charles VIII. of France, at the instigation of Lodovico Sforza, entered Italy, a few years after her marriage, for the avowed purpose of depriving her father of the throne of Naples, he passed through Pavia, where the young duke then lay on his death-bed, not without giving rise to suspicions that he had been poisoned. Touched with his misfortunes,

[u] *Guicciard. Hist. d' Italia, lib.* i.

[v] *Ibid. lib.* i.

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tunes, and mindful of the relationship between Galeazzo and himself, who were sisters' children, Charles resolved to see him. The presence of Lodovico, who did not choose to risk the consequences of a private and confidential interview, whilst it restricted the conversation of the king to formal inquiries about the health of the duke, and wishes for his recovery, excited both in him and in all present a deeper compassion for the unhappy prince. Isabella perceived the general sympathy; and throwing herself at the feet of the monarch, recommended to his protection her unfortunate husband and her infant son; at the same time, by tears and entreaties earnestly endeavouring to turn his resentment from her father and the house of Aragon. Attracted by her beauty, and moved by her solicitations, Charles appeared for a moment to relent, and the fate of Italy was suspended in the balance; but the king recollecting the importance of his preparations, and the expectations which his enterprise had excited, soon steeled his feelings against this feminine attack, and resolved, in spite of the suggestions of pity, and the claims of humanity, to persevere in his design.

Having now secured the tranquillity of Italy and the prosperity of his family by every means that prudence could dictate, Lorenzo began to enjoy

enjoy the fruits of his labours. These he found in the affection and good-will of his fellow-citizens; in observing the rapid progress of the fine arts, towards the promotion of which he had so amply contributed; in the society and conversation of men of genius and learning; and in the inexhaustible stores of knowledge with which he had enriched his own discriminating and comprehensive mind. CHAP. VIII.

Learned ecclesiasticks favoured by Lorenzo.

As his natural disposition, or the effects of his education, frequently led him to meditate with great seriousness on moral and religious subjects, so there were no persons for whom he entertained a greater esteem than those who adorned their character as teachers of religion by a corresponding rectitude of life and propriety of manners. Amongst these he particularly distinguished Mariano da Genazano, an Augustin monk and superiour of his order, for whose use, and that of his associates, he erected in the suburbs of Florence an extensive building, which he endowed as a monastery, and to which he was himself accustomed occasionally to retire, with a few select friends, to enjoy the conversation of this learned ecclesiastick. Politiano, in the preface to his *Miscellanea*, inveighing against those who affected to consider the study of polite letters as inconsistent with the performance

Mariano Genazano.

CHAP. VIII. ance of sacred functions, adduces Mariano as an illustrious instance of their union. "On "this account," says he to Lorenzo, "I cannot "sufficiently admire your highly esteemed friend "Mariano, whose proficiency in theological "studies, and whose eloquence and address in "his publick discourses, leave him without a "rival. The lessons which he inculcates derive "additional authority from his acknowledged "disinterestedness, and from the severity of "his private life; yet there is nothing morose "in his temper, nothing unpleasingly austere; "nor does he think the charms of poetry, or "the amusements and pursuits of elegant lite-"rature, below his attention." In one of his letters, the same author has left a very explicit account of the talents of Mariano, as a preacher[w]. "I was lately induced," says he, "to attend "one of his lectures, rather, to say the truth, "through curiosity, than with the hope of "being entertained. His appearance, however, "interested me in his favour. His address was "striking, and his eye marked intelligence. "My expectations were raised. He began— "I was attentive, a clear voice—select expres-"sion—elevated sentiment. He divides his "subject

[w] *Pol. Ep. lib.* iv. *Ep.* 6.

" subject—I perceive his distinctions. Nothing CHAP.
" perplexed; nothing insipid; nothing languid. VIII.
" He unfolds the web of his argument—I am
" enthralled. He refutes the sophism—I am
" freed. He introduces a pertinent narrative—
" I am interested. He modulates his voice—
" I am charmed. He is jocular—I smile. He
" presses me with serious truths—I yield to
" their force. He addresses the passions—
" the tears glide down my cheeks. He raises
" his voice in anger—I tremble and wish my-
" self away."

Of the particular subjects of discussion which engaged the attention of Lorenzo and his associates in their interview at the convent of San Gallo, Valori has left some account which he derived from the information of Mariano himself. The existence and attributes of the Deity, the insufficiency of temporal enjoyments to fill the mind, and the probability and moral necessity of a future state, were to Lorenzo the favourite objects of his discourse. His own opinion was pointedly expressed. " He is dead
" even to this life," said Lorenzo, " who has no
" hopes of another[x]."

Although

[x] *Valor. in vitâ, p.* 48.

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Girolamo Savonarola.

Although the citizens of Florence admired the talents, and respected the virtues of Mariano, their attention was much more forcibly excited by a preacher of a very different character, who possessed himself of their confidence, and entitled himself to their homage, by foretelling their destruction. This was the famous Girolamo Savonarola, who afterwards acted so conspicuous a part in the popular commotions at Florence, and contributed so essentially to the accomplishment of his own predictions. Savonarola was a native of Ferrara; but the reputation which he had acquired as a preacher induced Lorenzo de' Medici to invite him to Florence, where he took up his residence in the year 1488[y], and was appointed prior of the monastery of S. Marco. By pretensions to superiour sanctity, and by a fervid and overpowering elocution, he soon acquired an astonishing ascendency over the minds of the people; and in proportion as his popularity increased, his disregard of his patron

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[y] In 1489, according to Tiraboschi, *Storia della Lett. Ital. v.* vi. *par* 2. *p.* 377.; but Savonarola himself, in his *Trattato delle Rivelatione della reformatione della Chiesa, Ven.* 1536, (if indeed the work be his,) assigns an earlier period. In this work the fanatick assumes the credit of having foretold the death of Innocent VIII., of Lorenzo de' Medici, the irruption of the French into Italy, &c.

patron became more apparent, and was soon converted into the most vindictive animosity. It had been the custom of those who had preceded Savonarola in this office, to pay particular respect to Lorenzo de' Medici, as the supporter of the institution. Savonarola, however, not only rejected this ceremony, as founded in adulation, but as often as Lorenzo frequented the gardens of the monastery, retired from his presence, pretending that his intercourse was with God and not with man. At the same time, in his publick discourses, he omitted no opportunity of attacking the reputation and diminishing the credit of Lorenzo, by prognosticating the speedy termination of his authority, and his banishment from his native place. The divine word, from the lips of Savonarola, descended not amongst his audience like the dews of heaven; it was the piercing hail, the sweeping whirlwind, the destroying sword. The friends of Lorenzo frequently remonstrated with him on his suffering the monk to proceed to such an extreme of arrogance; but Lorenzo had either more indulgence or more discretion than to adopt hostile measures against a man, whom, though morose and insolent, he probably considered as sincere. On the contrary, he displayed his usual prudence and moderation, by declaring that whilst the preacher exerted himself to reform the citizens of

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of Florence, he should readily excuse his incivility to himself. This extraordinary degree of lenity, if it had no influence on the mind of the fanatick, prevented in a great degree the ill effects of his harangues; and it was not till after the death of Lorenzo, that Savonarola excited those disturbances in Florence, which led to his own destruction, and terminated in the ruin of the republick.

Matteo Bosso.

Another ecclesiastick, whose worth and talents had conciliated the favour of Lorenzo, was Matteo Bosso, superiour of the convent of r lar canons at Fiesole. Not less conversant the writings of the ancient philosophers, with the theological studies of his own Bosso was a profound scholar, a close rea and a convincing orator; but to these he u much higher qualifications—a candid min inflexible integrity, and an interesting simp of life and manners. To his treatise *De animi gaudiis*, is prefixed a recommend epistle from Politiano to Lorenzo de' M highly favourable to the temper and charac the author[z]. On the publication of this

[z] This treatise was first published in rence, by Ser Francisco Bonacursi.

nzo, with a CHAP.
ecuperationes VIII.
ame author,
he scholar[a].
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means in his power. His own intimate acquaintance with the tenets of the ancient philosophers, and his acute and versatile genius, enabled him to propose to their discussion subjects of the most interesting nature, and either to take a chief part in the conversation, or to avail himself of such observations as it might occasion. It appears also, that at some times he amused himself with offering to their consideration such topicks as he well knew would elude their researches, although they might exercise their powers; as men try their strength by shooting arrows towards the sky. Of this we have an instance in the sonnet addressed by him to Salviati[b]. "When the mind," says he, "escapes "from the storms of life, to the calm haven of "reflection,

[b] Lo spirito talora a se ridutto,
E dal mar tempestoso e travagliato
Fuggito in porto tranquillo e pacato,
Pensando ha dubbio e vuolne trar costrutto.
S'egli è ver, che da Dio proceda tutto,
E senza lui nulla è, cioè il pecato;
Per sua grazia se ci è concesso e dato
Seminar qui per corre eterno frutto;
Tal grazia in quel sol fa operazione
Ch' a riceverla è volto e ben disposto,
Dunque che cosa è quella ne dispone?
Qual prima sia, vorrei mi fosse esposto,
O tal grazia, o la buona inclinazione:
Rispondi or tu al dubbio, ch' è proposto.

" reflection, doubts arise which require solution. CHAP.
" If no one can effectually exert himself to VIII.
" obtain eternal happiness, without the special
" favour of God, and if that favour be only
" granted to those who are well disposed
" towards its reception, I wish to know whether
" the grace of God, or the good disposition,
" first commences ?" The learned theologian to whom this captious question was addressed, took it into his serious consideration, and after dividing it into seven parts, attempted its solution in a Latin treatise of considerable extent, which is yet preserved in the Laurentian Library[c].

Death of Madonna Clarice.

Lorenzo was not however destined long to enjoy that tranquillity which he had so assiduously laboured to secure. His life had scarcely reached its meridian, when the prospect was overhung with dark and lowering clouds. The death of his wife Clarice, which happened in the month of August 1488, was a severe shock to his domestick happiness. He was then absent from Florence, and did not arrive in time to see her before she died, which it seems gave rise

[c] *Georgii Benigni Salviati, in Rhythmum acutissimum magni Laurentii Medicis Quaestiones septem. &c.*

PLUT. lxxxiii. *Cod.* 18.

CHAP. VIII.

rise to insinuations that his conjugal affection was not very ardent[d]; but the infirm state of his own health at this time had rendered it necessary for him to visit the warm baths, where he received an account of her death before he was apprized of the danger of her situation. From his youth he had been afflicted with a disorder which occasioned extreme pain in his stomach and limbs. This complaint was probably of a gouty tendency; but the defective state of medicine at that time rendered it impossible for him to obtain any just information respecting it. The most eminent physicians in Italy were consulted, and numerous remedies were prescribed, without producing any beneficial effect[e]. By frequenting the tepid baths of Italy,

[d] Piero da Bibbiena, the secretary of Lorenzo, writes thus to the Florentine ambassadour at Rome; *Prid. Kal. Sextil.* 1488; A hore 14 morì la Clarice. Se voi sentissi che Lorenzo fosse biasimato di costà per non essersi trovato alla morte delle moglie, scusatelo. Parve al Leoni necessario, che andasse a prender l'acque della Villa, e poi non si credeva che morisse si presto.

Fabr. v. ii. *p.* 384.

[e] Some of these remedies are of a singular nature. Pietro Bono Avogradi, in a letter dated the eleventh of February 1488, advises Lorenzo, as a sure method of preventing a return of the *dolore di zonture*, or arthritick pains,

Italy, he obtained a temporary alleviation of his sufferings; but, notwithstanding all the assistance he could procure, his complaints rather increased than diminished, and for some time before his death he had reconciled his mind to an event which he knew could not be far distant. When his son Giovanni took his departure for Rome, to appear in the character of cardinal, Lorenzo with great affection recommended him to the care of Filippo Valori and Andrea Cambino, who were appointed to accompany him on his journey; at the same time expressing his apprehensions, which the event but too well justified, that he should see them no more[f]. CHAP. VIII.

In the year 1488, Girolamo Riario, whose machinations had deprived Lorenzo of a brother, Assassination of Girolamo Riario.

pains, with which he was afflicted, to make use of a stone called an heliotrope, which being set in gold, and worn on the finger so as to touch the skin, would produce the desired effect. "This," says he, "is a certain "preservative against both gout and rheumatism; I "have tried it myself, and found that its properties are "divine and miraculous." With the same letter he transmits to Lorenzo his *prognosticks* for the year 1488. *Apfi. No.* LXX.

[f] *Valor. in vitâ Laur. fi.* 65.

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ther, and had nearly involved Lorenzo himself in the same destruction, fell a victim to his accumulated crimes. By the assistance of Sixtus IV. he had possessed himself of a considerable territory in the vicinity of the papal state, and particularly of the cities of Imola and Forli, at the latter of which he had fixed his residence, and supported the rank of an independent prince. In order to strengthen his interest in Italy, he had connected himself with the powerful family of the Sforza, by a marriage with Caterina, sister of Galeazzo Sforza, duke of Milan, whose unhappy fate has already been related[g]. The general tenour of the life of Riario seems to have corresponded with the specimen before exhibited. By a long course of oppression he had drawn upon himself the hatred and resentment of his subjects, whom he had reduced to the utmost extreme of indigence and distress. Stimulated by repeated acts of barbarity, three of them resolved to assassinate him, and to trust for their safety, after the perpetration of the deed, to the opinion and support of their fellow-citizens. Although Riario was constantly attended by a band of soldiers, these men found means to enter his chamber

[g] *Vol.* I. *p.* 233.

chamber in the palace at the hour when he had just concluded his supper. One of them having cut him across the face with a sabre, he took shelter under the table, whence he was dragged out by Lodovico Orso, another of the conspirators, who stabbed him through the body. Some of his attendants having by this time entered the room, Riario made an effort to escape at the door, but there received from the third conspirator a mortal wound. It is highly probable that he was betrayed by the guard, for these three men were even permitted to strip the dead body, and throw it through the window, when the populace immediately rose and sacked the palace. The insurgents, having secured the widow and children of Riario, were only opposed by the troops in the fortress of the town, who refused to surrender it either to their entreaties or their threats. Being required, under pain of death, to exert her influence in obtaining for the populace possession of the fortress, the princess requested that they would permit her to enter it; but no sooner was she secure within the walls than she exhorted the soldiers to its defence, and, raising the standard of the duke of Milan, threatened the town with destruction. The inhabitants attempted to intimidate her by preparing to execute her children in her sight, for which purpose they

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they erected a scaffold before the walls of the fortress; but this unmanly proceeding, instead of awakening her affections, only excited her contempt, which she is said to have expressed in a very emphatick and extraordinary manner[h]. By her courage the inhabitants were however resisted, until Giovanni Bentivoglio, with a body of two thousand foot and eight hundred cavalry, from Bologna, gave her effectual assistance, and being joined by a strong reenforcement from Milan, compelled the inhabitants to acknowledge as their sovereign Ottavio Riario, the eldest son of Girolamo[i].

Lorenzo de' Medici has not escaped the imputation of having been privy to the assassination of his old and implacable adversary; but neither the relations of contemporary historians, nor the general tenour of his life, afford a presumption on which to ground such an accusation;

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[h] Rispose loro quella forte femmina, che se avessero fatti perir que' figliuoli, restavano a lei le forme per farne de gli altri; e vi ha chè dice (questa giunta forse fu immaginata e non vera) aver' ella anche alzata la gonna per chiarirli, che dicea la verita.

Murat. Ann. vol. ix. *fo.* 556.

[i] *Chronica Bossiana. an.* 1488. *Ed.* 1492.

accusation[k]; although it is certain that some years previous to this event, he had been in treaty

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[k] "Indignum sane facinus fuit, quod in Hieronymum Riarium Comitem admissum est; cujus participem Laurentium fuisse *multi contendunt*, et ab eo ad ulciscendas præteritorum temporum injurias compa-ratum." *Fabr. in vitâ, vol.* i. *p.* 175. There is, however, great reason to suspect that the modern biographer of Lorenzo has inadvertently given weight and credit to an accusation, which, if established, would degrade his character to that of a treacherous assassin. In vindication of him against this charge, I must therefore observe, that of the many accusers to whom Fabroni adverts, I have not met with one of the early historians who has even glanced at Lorenzo as having been associated with the conspirators, or a party in the perpetration of the deed. Neither Machiavelli nor Ammirato, although they relate the particulars of the transaction, have implicated in it the name of Lorenzo. Muratori, whose annals are compiled from contemporary and authentick documents, and who may therefore be considered as an original writer, is equally silent on this head. The ancient chronicle of Donato Bosso, printed only four years after the event, gives a yet more particular account, but alludes not to any interposition on the part of Lorenzo; and even Raffaello Maffei, his acknowledged adversary, though he adverts to the death of Riario, attributes it only to the interference of his own subjects. It is indeed a strong indication of the dignity of the character of Lorenzo, that a charge so natural, and so consistent with the spirit of

CHAP. VIII. treaty with the pope to deprive Riario of his usurpations, and to restore the territories occupied by him to the family of Ordolaffi, their former lords, which treaty was frustrated by the pope having insisted on annexing them to the states of the church[l]. The conspirators, however, soon after the death of Riario, apprized Lorenzo of the event, and requested his assistance; in consequence of which he despatched one of his envoys to Forli, with a view of obtaining authentick information as to the disposition of the inhabitants, and the views of the insurgents[m]; when finding that it was their

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of the times, should not have been alleged against him; and as he has been exculpated in the eyes of his contemporaries, it is surely not for posterity to criminate him.

[l] *Fabron. Adnot. & Monum.* v. ii. *p.* 316.

[m] The letter from Lodovico and Cecco d' Orsi, two of the conspirators, to Lorenzo de' Medici, written only a few days after the event, is inserted in the Appendix, and indisputably shows, that although they supposed Lorenzo would be gratified by the death of his adversary, he had no previous knowledge of such an attempt. To this I shall also subjoin the letter to Lorenzo from his envoy, which gives a minute account of

their intention to place themselves under the dominion of the pope, he declined any interference on their behalf, but availed himself of the opportunity of their dissensions, to restore to the Florentines the fortress of Piancaldoli, which had been wrested from them by Riario[n]. That CHAP. VIII.

of the whole transaction, and by which it appears, that although the pope had incited the conspirators to the enterprise, by expressing his abhorrence of the character of Riario, yet no other person was previously acquainted with their purpose. *Appx. No.* LXXI.

[n] In the attack of this place the Florentines lost their eminent citizen Cecca their engineer, whose skill had facilitated the success of their enterprise. In the *Exhortatio* of Philippus Reditus, addressed to Piero de' Medici, *in Magnanimi sui parentis imitationem*, the MS. of which is preserved in the Laurentian Library, this incident is particularly related; and as the passage has not hitherto been published, having been omitted with many others, in the edition of Lami, *Delic. Erudit. vol.* xii. which is printed from a copy in the Riccardi Library, I shall here insert it: "Piancaldolii arx strenue nostris recupe-" ratur. Ad iv. vero Kalendas Maias, nuntiata nece " Hieronymi Riarii, Imolæ Forliviique Tyranni, Pian-" caldolis oppidum nostrum, olim ab eo per summum " nefas nobis ereptum, admirabili quadam nostrorum " celeritate, tuo magnanimo Genitore procurante, strenue " recuperatur. In cujus arcis obsidione, Franciscus, " cognomine Ciccha, Fabrum magister, vir vel in ex-" pugnandis vel in defendendis urbibus tam nostra, " quam

CHAP. VIII. That the assassins of Riario were suffered to escape with impunity, is perhaps the best justification of their conduct, as it affords a striking proof that he had deserved his fate.

Tragical death of Galeotto Manfredi.

Another event soon afterwards took place at Faenza, which occasioned great anxiety to Lorenzo, and called for the exertion of all his conciliatory powers. If the list of crimes and assassinations which we have before had occasion to notice, may be thought to have disgraced the age, that which we have now to relate exhibits an instance of female ferocity, which renewed in the fifteenth century the examples of

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" quam nostrorum patrum memoria perillustris, sagitta " ictus çapite, pro patria feliciter occubuit." The death of Cecca is related with some variation by Vasari, *Vita del Cecca*. " Costui, quando i Florentini avevano l' eser- " cito intorno a' Piancaldoli, con l' ingegno suo fece sì, " che i soldati vi entrarono dentro per via di mine senza " colpo di spada. Dopo seguitando più oltre il mede- " simo esercito a certe altre castella, come volle la mala " sorte, volendo egli misurare alcune altezze in un luogo " difficile, fu ucciso; perciocchè, avendo messo il capo " fuor del muro per mandar un filo abbasso, un prete, " che era fra gli avversarii, i quali più temevano l' in- " gegno del Cecca, che le forze di tutto il campo, scari- " catogli una balestra a panca, gli conficcò di sorte un " verettone nella testa, che il poverello di subito se ne " morì."

of Gothick barbarity°. By the mediation of Lorenzo, who was equally the friend of the Manfredi and the Bentivoli, a marriage had taken place between Galeotto Manfredi, prince of Faenza, and Francesca, daughter of Giovanni Bentivoglio, which for some time seemed to be productive of that happiness to the parties, and those advantages to their respective families, which

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° There is a striking coincidence between this event and the narrative of Paullus Diaconus, upon which Giovanni Rucellai has founded his tragedy of *Rosmunda*. Alboin, king of the Huns, having conquered and slain in battle Comundus, king of the Geppidi, compels his daughter *Rosmunda* to accept of him in marriage, with a view of uniting their dominions under his sole authority; but not satisfied with the accession of power, he gratifies a brutal spirit of revenge, by compelling her, at a publick feast, to drink from the skull of her slaughtered father, which he had formed into a cup. This insult the princess avenges, by seducing to her purpose two of the king's intimate friends, who, in order to entitle themselves to her favour, assassinate him in the hour of intoxication. Rucellai has however preserved his heroine from the crimes of prostitution and assassination, and has introduced a disinterested lover in the person of *Almachilde*, who executes vengeance on the king from generous and patriotick motives. In justice to the author, it must also be observed, that the horrid incident upon which the tragedy is founded, is narrated only, and not represented before the audience.

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which Lorenzo had in view. It was not long, however, before Francesca discovered, or suspected, that her husband was engaged in an illicit amour, the information of which she thought proper to communicate both to her father and to Lorenzo. Ever on the watch to obtain further proofs of his infidelity, she found an opportunity of listening to a private interview between Galeotto and some pretender to astrological knowledge, in whom it seems he was credulous enough to place his confidence. Instead, however, of gaining any intelligence as to the object of her curiosity, she heard predictions and denunciations, which, as she thought, affected the safety of her father, and being unable to conceal her indignation, she broke in upon their deliberations, and reproached her husband with his treachery. Irritated by the intrusion and the pertinacity of his wife, Galeotto retorted with great bitterness; but finding himself unequal to a contest of this nature, he had recourse to more violent methods, and by menaces and blows reduced her to obedience. Bentivoglio was no sooner apprized of the ignominious treatment which his daughter had received, and of the circumstances which had given rise to it, than he resolved to carry her off from her husband by force. Taking with him a chosen body of soldiers, he approached Faenza by

by night, and seizing on Francesca and her infant son, brought them in safety to Bologna. This step he followed up, by preparing for an attack on the dominions of his son-in-law; but Galeotto having resorted to Lorenzo for his mediation, a reconciliation took place, and Francesca shortly afterwards returned to Faenza. Whether she still harboured in her bosom the lurking passions of jealousy and revenge, or whether some fresh insult on the part of her husband had roused her fury, is not known; but she formed and executed a deliberate plan for his assassination. To this end she feigned herself sick, and requested to see him in her chamber. Galeotto obeyed the summons, and, on entering his wife's apartments, was instantly attacked by four hired assassins, three of whom she had concealed under her bed. Though totally unarmed, he defended himself courageously; and as he had the advantages of great personal strength and activity, would probably have effected his escape; but when Francesca saw the contest doubtful, she sprung from the bed, and grasping a sword, plunged it into his body, and accomplished his destruction with her own hand. Conscious of her guilt, she immediately took refuge with her children in the castle, until her father once more came to her relief. On his approach to Faenza, Bentivoglio

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voglio was joined by the Milanese troops, who had been engaged in reinstating the family of Riario at Forli. The citizens of Faenza, conceiving that it was his intention to deprive them of Astorgio, the infant son of Galeotto, or rather perhaps under that pretext to possess himself of the city, refused to surrender to him his daughter and her family. He immediately attacked the place, which was not only successfully defended by the citizens, but in an engagement which took place under the walls, Borgomini, the commander of the Milanese troops, lost his life, and Bentivoglio was made a prisoner. During this dispute Lorenzo de' Medici had warmly espoused the cause of the citizens, and had encouraged them with promises of support, in case they should find it necessary in preserving their independence. The success of their exertions, and the disaster of Bentivoglio, changed the object of his solicitude; and no sooner did he receive intelligence of this event, than he despatched a messenger to Faenza, to interfere on the behalf of Bentivoglio, and if possible to obtain his release. This was with some difficulty accomplished, and Bentivoglio immediately resorted to Florence, to return his thanks to his benefactor. Sometime afterwards Lorenzo, at the request of Bentivoglio, solicited the liberation of his daughter, which was

was also complied with; and he was at length prevailed upon to intercede with the pope, to relieve her from the ecclesiastical censures which she had incurred by her crime. The reason given by Bentivoglio to Lorenzo, for requesting his assistance in this last respect will perhaps be thought extraordinary—*He had an intention of providing her with another husband!* CHAP. VIII.

CHAP. IX.

PROGRESS of the arts—State of them in the middle ages—Revival in Italy—Guido da Sienna—Cimabue—Giotto—Character of his works—The Medici encourage the arts—Masaccio—Paolo Uccello—Fra Filippo—Antonio Pollajuolo—Baldovinetti—Andrea da Castagna—Filippo Lippi—Luca Signorelli—Progress of Sculpture—Niccolo and Andrea Pisani—Ghiberti—Donatello—Imperfect state of the arts—Causes of their improvement—Numerous works of Sculpture collected by the ancient Romans—Researches after the remains of antiquity—Petrarca—Lorenzo de' Medici brother of Cosmo—Niccolo Niccoli—Poggio Bracciolini—Collection of antiques formed by Cosmo—Assiduity of Lorenzo in augmenting it—Lorenzo establishes a school for the study of the antique—Michelagnolo Buonarroti—Resides with Lorenzo—Forms an intimacy with Politiano—Advantages over his predecessors—His sculptures—Rapid improvement of taste—Raffaelle d' Urbino—Michelagnolo unjustly censured—Other artists favoured by Lorenzo—Gian-Francesco Rustici—Francesco Granacci—Andrea Contucci—Lorenzo encourages the study of Architecture—Giuliano da San Gallo—Attempts to renew the practice of Mosaick—Invention of engraving on copper—Revival of engraving on gems and stones.

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THOSE periods of time which have been most favourable to the progress of letters and science have generally been distinguished by an equal proficiency in the arts. The productions of Roman sculpture, in its best ages, bear nearly the same proportion to those of the Greeks, as the imitative labours of the Roman authors bear to the original works of their great prototypes. During the long ages of ignorance that succeeded the fall of the Western empire, letters and the fine arts underwent an equal degradation; and it would be as difficult to point out a literary work of those times which is entitled to approbation, as it would be to produce

Progress of the arts.

CHAP. IX. produce a statue or a picture. When these studies began to revive, a Guido da Sienna, a Cimabue, rivalled a Guittone d' Arezzo, or a Piero delle Vigne. The crude buds that had escaped the severity of so long a winter soon began to swell, and Giotto, Buffalmacco, and Gaddi, were the contemporaries of Dante, of Boccaccio, and of Petrarca[a].

State of the arts in the middle ages.

It is not however to be presumed, that, even in the darkest intervals of the middle ages, these arts were entirely extinguished. Some traces of them are found in the rudest state of society; and the efforts of the Europeans, the South Americans, and the Chinese, without rivalship, and without participation, are nearly on an equality with each other. Among the manuscripts of the Laurentian Library are preserved some specimens of miniature paintings which

[a] Videmus picturas ducentorum annorum nulla prorsus arte politas; scripta illius ætatis rudia sunt, inepta, incompta: post Petrarcham emerserunt literæ; post Joctum surrexere pictorum manus; utraque ad summam jam videmus artem, pervenisse. *Æn. Silvii* (*Pii* ii.) *Epist.* 119. *ap. Baldinuc. Notiz. Dec.* 1. Such was the opinion of this pontiff, who had great learning and some taste. He was only mistaken in supposing that he had seen the perfection of the art.

which are unquestionably to be referred to the tenth century, but they bear decisive evidence of the barbarism of the times; and although they certainly aim at picturesque representation, yet they may with justice be considered rather as perverse distortions of nature, than as the commencement of an elegant art[b].

Revival in Italy.

Antecedent, however, to Cimabue, to whom Vasari attributes the honour of having been the restorer of painting, Guido da Sienna had demonstrated to his countrymen the possibility of improvement. His picture of the virgin, which yet remains tolerably entire in the church of S. Domenico, in his native place, and which bears the date of 1221, is presumed, with reason, to be the earliest work now extant of any Italian painter.

Guido da Sienna.

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[b] These pieces have lately been engraved and published in the *Etruria Pittrice*, a work which appears periodically at Florence, and contains specimens of the manner of the Tuscan artists from the earliest times, executed so as to give some idea of the original pictures. To this work, which would have been much more valuable if greater attention had been paid to the engravings, I shall, in sketching the progress of the art, have frequent occasion to refer.

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Cimabue.

painter[c]. The Florentine made a bolder effort, and attracted more general admiration. Every new production of his pencil was regarded as a prodigy, and riches and honours were liberally bestowed on the fortunate artist. His picture of the Madonna, after having excited the wonder of a monarch, and given the name of *Borgo Allegro* to that district of the city whither his countrymen resorted to gratify themselves with a sight of it, was removed to its destined situation in the church of *S. Maria Novella*, to the sound of musick, in a solemn procession of the citizens[d]. The modern artist who observes this picture may find it difficult to account for such a degree of enthusiasm[e]; but excellence is merely

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[c] Engraved in the *Etruria Pittrice*, *No.* iii. Under this picture is inscribed, in Gothick characters, the following verse:

"Me Guido de Senis diebus depinxit amenis
"Quem Christus lenis nullis velit agere penis.
"A. D. MCCXXI."

[d] *Vasari vitâ di Cimabue.*

[e] Engraved in the *Etruria Pittrice*, *No.* viii. The virgin is seated with the infant on her knee, in a rich chair, which is supported by six angels, represented as adults, though less than the child. The head of the Virgin is somewhat

merely relative, and it is a sufficient cause of approbation, if the merit of the performance exceed the standard of the age. Those productions which, compared with the works of a Raffaello, or a Titian, may be of little esteem, when considered with reference to the times that gave them birth, may justly be entitled to no small share of applause. CHAP. IX.

The glory of Cimabue was obscured by that of his disciple Giotto[f], who, from figuring the sheep which it was his business to tend, became the best painter that Italy had produced[g]. It affords Giotto.

somewhat inclined, the countenance melancholy, not without some pretensions to grace; the rest of the picture is in the true style of Gothick formality.

[f] Credette Cimabue nella pintura,
Tener lo campo; ed ora ha Giotto il grido,
Sì che la fama di colui oscura.
Dante Purg. Cant. xi.

[g] *Manni*, in his *Illustr. del Boccaccio*, *p.* 414. deduces the name of Giotto from Angiolotto; but M. Tenhove with more probability derives it from Ambrogio. *Ambrogio*, *Ambrogiotto*, *Giotto*; "Quel étranger," says this lively author, "aperçoit d'abord sous les bizarres "déguisemens de *Bista*, *Betto*, *Bambo*, *Bindo*, *Bacci*, *Tani*, "*Cece*, *Giomo*, *Nigi*, *Meo*, *Nanni*, *Vanni*, *Mazo*, *Lippo*, "*Lippozzo*,

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affords no inadequate proof of his high reputation, when we find him indulging his humour in an imitation of the celebrated artist of Cos, and sending to the pope, who had desired to see one of his drawings, a circle, struck with such freedom, as to show the hand of a master, yet with such truth, as to have given rise to a proverb[h]. Inferiour artists hazard not such freedoms with the great. Giotto seems, however, to have delighted in the eccentricities of the art. One of his first essays, when he began to study under Cimabue, was to paint a fly on the nose of one of his master's portraits, which the deluded artist attempted to brush off with

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" *Lippozzo*, *Pipo*, *Guccio*, *Mico*, *Caca*, *Toto*, *&c.* les noms " de batême les plus vulgaires et les plus communs? " Les autres Italiens se sont toujours moqués de cet " usage Florentin, qui en effet n'est pas moins risible que " si M. Hume, dans sa belle histoire d'Angleterre, nous " entretenait de *Billy le conquérant*, de *Tom Becket*, de " *Jackey le grand-terrein*, appellé *Sans-Terre*, des grands " Rois *Ned.* I. & III. *du nom*, de la bigotte *Reine Molly*, " de la grande *Reine Bess*, et de son cher amant *Bobby* " *Devereux*, envoyé par elle au supplice," &c.

Mem. Gen. &c. liv. i. *p.* 37.

[h] Divolgatasi poi questa cosa, ne nacque il proverbio, che ancora è in uso dirsi a gli uomini di grossa pasta: *Tu sei più tondo che l' O di Giotto. Vasar. vita di Giotto.*

with his hand[i]; a tale that may rank with the horse of Apelles, the curtain of Parrhasius, or the grapes of Zeuxis. Boccaccio has introduced this celebrated painter with great approbation in one of his novels[k]; a singular conversation is said to have occurred between him and Dante[l]; and Petrarca held his works in such high esteem, that one of his pictures is the subject of a legacy to a particular friend in

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i *Vasari vita di Giotto.*

k Giotto ebbe un ingegno di tanta eccellenza, che niuna cosa dà la natura, madre di tutte le cose, ed operatrice, col continuo girar de' cieli, che egli con lo stile, e con la penna, e col pennello non dipignesse, sì simile a quella, che non simile, anzi più tosto dessa paresse.

Decam. Gior. vi. *Nov.* 5.

Benvenuto da Imola, one of the commentators of Dante, relates, that whilst Giotto resided at Padua, Dante paid him a visit, and was received by him with great attention. Observing however that the children of Giotto bore a great resemblance to their father, whose features and appearance were not very prepossessing, he inquired how it came to pass that his pictures and his children were so very unlike each other, the former being so beautiful, the latter so coarse. *Quia fingo de die, sed fingo de nocte*, said the painter.

Manni, Illust. del Bocc. fi. 417.

CHAP. IX. in his will[m]. Upwards of a century after his death, Lorenzo de' Medici, well aware that the most efficacious method of exciting the talents of the living is to confer due honour on departed merit, raised a bust to his memory in the church of *S. Maria del Fiore*, the inscription for which was furnished by Politiano.[n].

Character of his works.

The merits of Giotto and his school are appreciated with great judgment by Vasari, who attributes to him and his predecessor Cimabue the credit of having banished the insipid

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[m] Transeo ad dispositionem aliarum rerum; predicto igitur domino meo Paduano, quia et ipse per Dei gratiam non eget, et ego nihil aliud habeo dignum se, mitto Tabulam meam sive historiam Beatæ virginis Mariæ, operis Jocti pictoris egregii, quæ mihi ab amico meo Michele Vannis de Florentia missa est, in cujus pulchritudinem ignorantes non intelligunt, magistri autem artis stupent. *Vasari vita di Giotto.*

[n] Ille ego sum per quem Pictura extincta revixit,
Cui quam recta manus tam fuit et facilis.
Naturæ decrat nostræ quod defuit arti;
Plus licuit nulli pingere nec melius.
Miraris turrim egregiam sacro ære sonantem?
Hæc quoque de modulo crevit ad astra meo.
Denique sum JOTTUS, quid opus fuit illa referre?
Hoc nomen longi carminis instar erit.

insipid and spiritless manner introduced by the Greek artists, and given rise to a new and more natural style of composition. This the historian denominates thé *maniera di Giotto*°. " Instead of the harsh outline, circumscribing " the

° *Proemio di Giorgio Vasari* to the second part of his work, written, like all his other prefaces, with great judgment, candour, and historical knowledge of his art. *Tractant fabrilia fabri*—The early painters are fortunate in possessing an historian, who without envy, spleen, or arrogance, and with as little prejudice or partiality as the imperfection of human nature will allow, has distributed to each of his characters his due portion of applause. If he has on any occasion shown too apparent a bias in favour of an individual, it leans towards Michelagnolo Buonarroti, in whose friendship he gloried, and whose works he diligently studied; but an excess of admiration for this great man will scarcely be imputed to him as a fault. As a painter and an architect, Vasari holds a respectable rank. In the former department, his productions are extremely numerous. One of his principal labours is his historical suit of pictures of the Medici family, with their portraits, painted for the great duke Cosmo I. in the *Palazzo Vecchio* at Florence, of which Vasari himself has given a particular account, published by Filippo Giunti, in 1588, and entitled *Ragionamenti del Sig. Cav. Giorgio Vasari sopra le invenzione da lui dipinte in Firenze, &c.* Reprinted in Arezzo, 1762. In this series of pictures are represented the principal incidents in the life of Lorenzo. This work has been engraved, but not in such a manner as to do justice to the painter.

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" the whole figure, the glaring eyes, the " pointed feet and hands, and all the defects " arising from a total want of shadow, the " figures of Giotto exhibit a better attitude, " the heads have an air of life and freedom, the " drapery is more natural, and there are even " some attempts at fore-shortening the limbs." " Besides these improvements," continues this " author, " Giotto was the first who represented " in his pictures, the effect of the passions on " the human countenance. That he did not " proceed further must be attributed to the " difficulties which attend the progress of the " art, and to the want of better examples. In " many of the essential requisites of his profes- " sion, he was indeed equaled, if not surpassed, " by some of his contemporaries. The colour- " ing of Gaddi had more force and harmony, " and the attitudes of his figures more vivacity. " Simone da Sienna is to be preferred to him " in the composition of his subjects, and other " painters excelled him in other branches of " the art; but Giotto had laid the soljd found- " ation of their improvements. It is true, all " that was effected by these masters may be " considered only as the first rude sketch of a " sculptor towards completing an elegant statue, " and if no further progress had been made, " there would not, upon the whole, have been " much

"much to commend; but whoever considers "the difficulties under which their works were "executed, the ignorance of the times, the "rarity of good models, and the impossibility "of obtaining instruction, will esteem them "not only as commendable, but wonderful "productions, and will perceive with pleasure "these first sparks of improvement which "were afterwards fanned into so bright a "flame."

The Medici encourage the arts.

The patronage of the family of the Medici is almost contemporary with the commencement of the art. Giovanni de' Medici, the father of Cosmo, had employed his fellow-citizen, Lorenzo de' Bicci, to ornament with portraits a chamber in one of his houses in Florence, which afterwards became the residence of Lorenzo, the brother of Cosmo[p]. The liberality of Cosmo led the way to further improvement. Under Masaccio, the study of nature and actual observation were substituted for cold and servile imitation. By this master, his competitors, and his scholars, every component branch of the art was carried to some degree of perfection.

Masaccio.

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[p] *Vasar. in vita di Lor. de' Bicci.*

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Paolo Uccello.

perfection. Paolo Uccello was the first who boldly surmounted the difficulty which Giotto, though sensible of its importance, had ineffectually attempted to overcome, and gave that ideal depth to his labours, which is the essence of picturesque representation[q]. This he accomplished by his superiour knowledge of perspective, which he studied in conjunction with the celebrated Giannozzo Manetti, and in the attainment of which the painter and the scholar were mutually serviceable to each other[r]. The rules which he thence acquired he applied to practice, not only in the back-grounds of his pictures, but in his representation of the human figure, of which he expressed the *Scorci*, or fore-shortenings, with accuracy and effect[s]. The merit of

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[q] 'E da osservare che non si trova prima di lui nessuno scorto di figure, perciò a ragione può dirsi aver questo valent' uomo fatto un gran progresso nell' arte.

Etruria Pittrice. No. xiv.

[r] E fu il primo che ponesse studio grande nella prospettiva, introducendo il modo di mettere le figure su' piani, dove esse posar devono, diminuendole a proporzione; il che, da maestri avanti a lui, si faceva a caso, e senz' alcuna consideratione.

Baldinuc. Dec. ii. *del. par.* i. *sec.* iv.

[s] In his picture of the inebriety of Noah, in the church of S. Maria Novella, is a figure of the patriarch stretched

of having been the first to apply mathematical rules to the improvement of works of art, and the proficiency which he made in so necessary and so laborious a study, if it had not obtained from Vasari a greater share of praise, ought at least to have secured the artist from that ridicule with which he seems inclined to treat him[t]. The elder Filippo Lippi gave to his figures a boldness and grandeur before unknown. He attended also to the effect of his back-grounds, which were however in general too minutely finished. About two years after his death, which happened in the year 1469, Lorenzo de' Medici, who was then absent from Florence on a journey, to congratulate Sixtus IV. on his accession to the pontificate, took the opportunity of passing through Spoleto, where he requested permission from the magistrates to remove the ashes of the artist to the church of *S. Maria del Fiore* at Florence. The community of that place

Fra Filippo.

stretched on the ground, with his feet towards the front of the picture; yet, even in this difficult attitude, the painter has succeeded in giving an explicit idea of his subject. *v. Etrur. Pittr. No.* xiv.

[t] La moglie soleva dire che tutta la notte Paola stava nello scrittoio, per trovar i termini della prospettiva, e che quando ella lo chiamava a dormire, egli le diceva, *O che dolce cosa è questa prospettiva! Vas. vita di Paolo.*

CHAP. IX. place were however unwilling to relinquish so honourable a deposit; and Lorenzo was therefore content to testify his respect for the memory of the painter, by engaging his son, the younger Filippo, to erect in the church of Spoleto a monument of marble, the inscription upon which, written by Politiano, has led his historian Menckenius into a mistake almost too apparent to admit of an excuse[u].

In

[u] *In Philippum Fratrem Pictorem.*

Conditus hic ego sum picturæ fama PHILIPPUS;
Nulli ignota meæ est gratia mira manus.
Artifices potui digitis animare colores,
Speratáque animos fallere voce diu.
Ipsa meis stupuit natura expressa figuris,
Meque suis fassa est artibus esse parem.
Marmoreo tumulo MEDICES LAURENTIUS hic me
Condidit: ante humili pulvere tectus eram.

From the appellation of *Frater*, given by Lippi to Politiano, Menckenius conjectures, that he was his brother. "Is enim quis sit, cujus hic frater dicitur "Philippus, si Politianus non est, hariolari non pos-"sum." *Menck. in vitâ Pol. p.* 31. Filippo had entered into holy orders, whence he was called *Fra Filippo*; a circumstance which Menckenius might easily have discovered, though he professes not to have been able to obtain any information respecting it. "Nihil enim eâ, de re scrip-"tores alii, etsi non desint, qui maxime excelluisse hunc "*Philippum* nobillissima pingendi arte suo confirment "testimonio." *Ibid. p.* 637.

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Antonio Pollajuola.

In the anatomy of the human figure, which now began to engage the more minute attention of the painter, Antonio Pollajuolo took the lead of all his competitors. By accurate observation, as well on the dead as on the living, he acquired a competent knowledge of the form and action of the muscles[v], which he exemplified in a striking manner in his picture of Hercules and Antæus, painted for Lorenzo de' Medici, in which he is said not only to have expressed the strength of the conqueror, but the languor and inanimation of the conquered[w]; but his most celebrated work is the death of S. Sebastian, yet preserved in the chapel of the Pucci family at Florence, and of which Vasari has given a particular account[x]. In this picture, the figure of the dying saint was painted from nature after Gino Capponi. In the

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[v] Egli s' intese degli ignudi più modernamente, che fatto non avevano gli altri maestri innanzi a lui; e scorticò molti uomini, per vedere la notomia lor sotto; e fu primo a mostrare il modo di cercare i muscoli, che avessero forma, ed ordine nelle figure.

Vasari vita di Pollajuolo.

[w] *Vasari, ut supra.*

[x] *Vasari, ut supra.* This picture is engraved and published in the *Etruria Pittrice, No.* xxiv.

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Baldovinetti.

the figures of the two assassins, who are bending their cross-bows, he has shown great knowledge of muscular action. Baldovinetti excelled in portraits, which he frequently introduced in his historical subjects. In a picture of the queen of Sheba on a visit to Solomon, he painted the likeness of Lorenzo de' Medici, and of the celebrated mechanick Lorenzo da Volpaia[y]; and in another picture intended as its companion, those of Giuliano de' Medici, Luca Pitti, and other Florentine citizens. The resemblance of Lorenzo was also introduced by Domenico Ghirlandajo, in a picture of S. Francesco taking the habit, painted by him in the chapel of the Trinity at Florence. Until this time the pictures of the Tuscan artists had been executed in distemper, or with colours rendered cohesive by glutinous substances. The practice of

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[y] Ritrasse costui assai di naturale, e dove nella detta cappella fece la storia della Reina Saba, che va a udire la sapienza di Salomone, ritrasse il magnifico Lorenzo de' Medici, che fu padre di papa Leone decimo, Lorenzo della Volpaja eccellentissimo maestro d' oriuoli, ed ottimo astrologo, il quale fu quello, che fece per il detto Lor. de' Medici il bellissimo oriuolo che ha oggi il Sig. Duca Cosimo in Palazzo; nel quale oriulo tutte le ruote de' pianeti camminano di continuo; il che è cosa rara, e la prima che fusse mai fatta di questa maniera.

Vas. vita di Baldov. v. ante, p. 112.

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of painting in oil, so essentially necessary to the duration of a picture, was now first introduced amongst his countrymen by Andrea da Castagna[s]. The younger Filippo Lippi attempted, and not without effect, to give a greater share of energy and animation to his productions. His attitudes are frequently bold and diversified; and his figures have expression, vivacity,

Andrea da Castagna. Filippo Lippi.

[s] Era nel suo tempo in Firenze un tal Domenico da Venezia, pittore di buon nome, col quale egli (Andrea) aveva fintamente legata grande amicizia, affine di cavargli del mano la maestra di colorire a olio, che allora in Toscana non era da alcun altro praticata, nè meno saputa, fuori che da Domenico, come gli riuscì da fare. *Baldin. Dec.* iii. *scc.* v. The invention of painting in oil, though introduced so late into Italy, is probably more ancient than has generally been supposed. It is commonly attributed to the Flemish artists, Hubert and John Van Eyck, who flourished about the year 1400; but professor Lessing, in a small treatise "*sur l' ancien-*"*neté de la peinture à l'huile*," printed at Brunswick in 1774, has endeavoured to shew that this art is of much greater antiquity. His suggestions have since been confirmed by the researches of M. de Mechel of Basle, who, in arranging the immense collection of pictures of the imperial gallery of Vienna, has discovered several pieces painted in oil, as early as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Of these the earliest is a picture by Thomas de Mutina, a Bohemian gentleman; the others are by Theodoric of Prague, and Nic. Wurmser of Strasbourg; both artists at the court of the emperour Charles IV. *v. Mechel, Catal. des Tabl. de Vienne, &c. in pref.*

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vivacity, and motion[a]. It is deserving of remark, that he prepared the way to the study of the antique, by introducing into his pictures, the vases, utensils, arms, and dresses of the ancients[b]. But of all the masters of this period, perhaps Luca Signorelli united the most important excellencies; his composition was good; in drawing the naked figure he particularly excelled[c]; in his picture of the institution of the eucharist,

Luca Signorelli.

[a] His celebrated picture of S. Filippo and the serpent, painted in the chapel of the Strozzi at Florence, and engraved in the *Etruria Pittrice*, *No.* xxvii. is a sufficient proof of the truth of this remark. Filippo Lippi was the son of the former painter of the same name, usually called Fra Filippo. Lorenzo employed him to ornament his palace at Poggio-Cajano, where he painted a sacrifice in Fresco, but the work was left unfinished.

[b] Non lavorò mai opera alcuna, nelle quale delle cose antiche di Roma con gran studio, non si servisse, in vasi, calzari, trofei, bandiere, cimieri, ornamenti di tempj, abbigliamenti di portature da capo, strane fogge da dosso, armature, scimitarre, spade, toghe, manti, ed altri cose diverse e belle, che grandissimo e sempiterno obbligo se gli debbe. *Vasar. vita di Filip.*

[c] Col fondamento del disegno, e degli ignudi particolarmente, et con la grazia della invenzione, e dispozitione delle historie, asperse alla maggior parte degli artefici la via alla ultima perfezzione dell' arte, alla quale poi poterono dar cima quelli che seguirono. *Vasar. vita di*

eucharist, yet remaining in the choir of the cathedral at Cortona[d], the figure of Christ might be mistaken for the production of one of the Caracci. In the variety and expression of countenance, in the disposition of the drapery, even in the just distribution of light, this picture has great merit; and if some remnants of the manner of the times prevent us from giving it unlimited approbation, it may certainly be considered as the harbinger of a better taste. CHAP. IX.

Progress of sculpture.

The art of sculpture, dependent on the same principles, and susceptible of improvement from the same causes as that of painting, made a proportionable progress. The inventive genius of the Italian artists had very early applied it to almost every variety of material; and figures in wood, in clay, in metals, and in marble, were fashioned by Giovanni and Niccolo Pisano, by Agostino and Agnolo Sanese, which, though rude and incorrect, excited the admiration of the times in which they were produced. Their successour Andrea Pisano, the contemporary of Giotto,

Niccolo Pisano.

Andrea Pisano.

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di Luca Signorelli. It must however be observed, that Luca lived till 1521, before which time an important reformation had taken place in the arts.

[d] Engraved in the *Etruria Pittrice, No.* xxxii.

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Ghiberti and Donatello.

Giotto, supported the credit of the art, which was then endangered by the sudden progress of its powerful rival; and in the early part of the fifteenth century the talents of Ghiberti and Donatello carried it to a degree of eminence which challenged the utmost exertions, and perhaps even excited the jealousy, of the first painters of the age. It must indeed be acknowledged, that the advantages which sculpture possesses are neither few nor unimportant. The severe and simple mode of its execution, the veracity of which it is susceptible, and the durability of its productions, place it in a favourable point of view, when opposed to an art whose success is founded on illusion, which not only admits, but courts meretricious ornament, and whose monuments are fugitive and perishable[e]. These arts, so distinct in their operations, approach each other in works in *relievo*, which

[e] I am aware that much is to be said on the opposite side of the question, but I mean not to discuss a subject upon which almost every writer on the history of the arts has either directly or incidentally exercised his ingenuity. Among others, I may refer the reader to the *Proemi* of Vasari, the *Lezzione* of Benedetto Varchi, *della maggioranza dell' arti*, the works of Baldinucci, Richardson, and Mengs, and to the posthumous works of Dr. Adam Smith, lately published, in which the reader will find many acute observations on this subject.

which unite the substantial form that characterizes sculpture, with the ideal depth of picturesque composition. In this province Donatello particularly excelled; and in Cosmo de' Medici he found a patron who had judgment to perceive, and liberality to reward his merits. But the genius of Donatello was not confined to one department. His group of Judith and Holofernes, executed in bronze for the community of Florence, his statue of S. George, his Annunciation, and his Zuccone, in one of the niches of the Campanile at Florence, all of which yet remain, have met with the uniform approbation of succeeding times, and are perhaps as perfect as the narrow principles upon which the art was then conducted would allow. CHAP. IX.

Notwithstanding the exertions of these masters, which were regarded with astonishment by their contemporaries, and are yet entitled to attention and respect, it does not appear that they had raised their views to the true end of the profession[f]. Their characters rarely excelled Imperfection of the art.

[f] 'E necessario il confessare, che non poteva la pittura, benchè fatta viva dalle mani di que' maestri, far gran pompa di se stessa, perchè molto le mancava di disegno, di

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excelled the daily prototypes of common life; and their forms, although at times sufficiently accurate, were often vulgar and heavy. In the pictures which remain of this period, the limbs are not marked with that precision which characterizes a well-informed artist. The hands and feet, in particular, appear soft, enervated, and delicate, without distinction of sex or character. Many practices yet remained that evince the imperfect state of the art. Ghirlandajo and Baldovinetti continued to introduce the portraits of their employers in historick composition, forgetful of that *simplex duntaxat et unum* with which a just taste can never dispense. Cosimo Roselli, a painter of no inconsiderable reputation, attempted by the assistance of gold and ultramarine, to give a factitious splendour to his performances. To every thing great and elevated, the art was yet a stranger; even the celebrated picture of Pollajuolo exhibits only a group of half naked and vulgar wretches, discharging their arrows at a miserable fellow-creature, who, by changing places with one of his murderers, might with equal propriety become

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di colorito, di morbidezza, di scorti, di movenze, di attitudini, di rilievo, e di altre finezze e vivacità, onde ella potesse in tutto e per tutto assomiliarsi al vero.

Baldin. Dec. iii. *sec.* v.

come a murderer himself[g]. Nor was it till the time of Michelagnolo that painting and sculpture rose to their true object, and, instead of exciting the wonder, began to rouse the passions and interest the feelings of mankind. CHAP. IX.

By what fortunate concurrence of circumstances the exquisite taste evinced by the ancients in works of art was revived in modern times, deserves inquiry. It has generally been supposed Causes of improvement.

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g Objects of horrour and disgust, the cold detail of deliberate barbarity, can never be proper subjects of art, because they exclude the efforts of genius. Even the powers of Shakspeare are annihilated in the butcheries of Titus Andronicus. Yet the reputation of some of the most celebrated Italian painters has been principally founded on this kind of representation. "Ici," says M. Tenhove, "c'est S. Etienne qu'on lapide, et dont je "crains que la cervelle ne rejaillisse sur moi; plus loin "c'est S. Barthélémi tout sanglant, tout écorché; je "compte ses muscles et ses nerfs. Vingt flèches ont "criblé Sebastien. L'horrible tête du Baptiste est dans "ce plat. Le gril de S. Laurent sert de pendant à la "chaudiere de S. Jean—Je recule d'horreur." *Mem. Gen. lib.* x. May it not well be doubted, whether spectacles of this kind, so frequent in places devoted to religious purposes, may not have had a tendency rather to keep alive a spirit of ferocity and resentment, than to inculcate those mild and benevolent principles in which the essence of religion consists?

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posed that these arts, having left in Greece some traces of their former splendour, were transplanted into Italy by Greek artists, who, either led by hopes of emolument, or impelled by the disastrous state of their own country, sought, among the ruins of the western empire, a shelter from the impending destruction of the east. Of the labours of these masters, specimens indeed remain in different parts of Italy; but, in point of merit, they exceed not those of the native Italians, and some of them even bear the marks of deeper barbarism[h]. In fact, these arts were equally debased in Greece and in Italy, and it was not therefore by an intercourse of this nature that they were likely to receive improvement. Happily, however, the same favourable circumstances which contributed to the revival of letters took place also with respect to the arts; and if the writings of the ancient authors excited the admiration and called forth the exertions of the scholar, the remains

[h] Venise, et quelques villes de la Romagne, ou de l'ancien Exarchat de Ravenne, montrent encore des traces de ces barbouillages Grecs. Le caractère d'un assez profonde barbarie s'y fait sentir. La peinture qui représente les obsèques de St. Ephraim, qu'on voit dans le *Museo Sacro*, partie de la Bibliothèque du Vatican, passe pour le triste chef d'œuvre de ces fils bâtards de Zeuxis.

Tenh. Mem. Gen. lib. vii.

remains of ancient skill in marble, gems, and other durable materials, at length caught the attention of the artist, and were converted from objects of wonder into models of imitation. To facilitate the progress of these studies, other fortunate circumstances concurred. The freedom of the Italian governments, and particularly that of Florence, gave to the human faculties their full energies[i]. The labours of the painter were early associated with the mysteries of the prevailing religion, whilst the wealth and ostentation of individuals and of states held out rewards sufficient to excite the endeavours even of the phlegmatick and the indolent. CHAP. IX.

From the time of the consul Mummius, who, whilst he plundered the city of Corinth of its beautiful productions of art, regarded them rather Sculpture of the ancient Romans.

[i] L'uomo libero, con volontà, fa tutto quel che può, più o meno, secondo la sua capacità; ma lo schiavò fa al più quello, che gli si comanda, e guasta la sua propria volontà, collo violenza, che gli si fa, per ubbidire. L'abito di farlo opprime finalmente la sua capacità, e la sua razza peggiora, fino, a non più desiderare quello, che dispera ottenere. *Opere di Menge.* v. i. *p.* 228.

CHAP. IX. rather as household furniture, than as pieces of exquisite skill[k], the avidity of the Romans for the works of the Grecian artists had been progressively increasing, till at length they became the first objects of proconsular rapacity, and the highest gratification of patrician luxury. The astonishing number which Verres had acquired during his government of Sicily, forms one of the most striking features of the invectives of Cicero; who asserts, that throughout that whole province, so distinguished by the riches and taste of its inhabitants, there was not a single statue or figure, either of bronze, marble, or ivory, not a picture or a piece of tapestry, not a gem or a precious stone, not even a gold or silver utensil, of the workmanship of Corinth or Delos, which Verres during his pretorship had not sought out and examined, and if he approved of it, brought it away with him; insomuch that Syracuse, under his government, lost more statues than it had lost soldiers in the victory of Marcellus.

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[k] Mummius tam rudis fuit, ut capta Corintho, cum maximorum artificum perfectas manibus tabulas ac statuas in Italiam portandas locaret, juberet prædici conducentibus, si eas prædidissent, novas eos redditurus. *Vel. Paterc. lib.* i. *c.* 13.

cellus[1]. Such, however, was the desolation which took place in Italy during the middle ages, occasioned not only by natural calamities, but by the yet more destructive operation of moral causes, the rage of superstition and the ferocity of barbarian conquerors, that of the innumerable specimens of art, which, till the times of the later emperours, had decorated the palaces and villas of the Roman nobility, scarcely a specimen or a vestige was, in the beginning

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[1] The very minute account given by the Roman orator, in his fourth accusation against Verres, of the pieces of Grecian sculpture which he obtained from Sicily, has enabled the Abbe Fraguier to draw up a dissertation which he has entitled the *Gallery of Verres*. *Mem. de litt. v.* ix. *p.* 260. *Winckel. Storia delle arti del Disegno. lib.* x. *c.* 3. *Ed. Milan*, 1779, *in not.* Amongst those particularly enumerated by Cicero, is a marble statue of Cupid by Praxiteles, a Hercules in bronze by Myron, two Canephoræ, or female figures, representing Athenian virgins, bearing on their heads implements of sacrifice, the work of Polycletes; a celebrated statue of Diana, which, after having been carried off from the citizens of Segesta by the Carthaginians, was restored to them by Scipio Africanus: another of Mercury, which had been given them by the same liberal benefactor; the statues of Ceres, of Esculapius, of Bacchus, and lastly that of Jupiter himself, of which the sacrilegious *amateur* scrupled not to plunder his temple at Syracuse.

Cic. in Verrem, lib. iv.

CHAP. IX. beginning of the fifteenth century, to be discovered. Even the city of Rome could only display six statues, five of marble and one of brass, the remains of its former splendour[m]; and the complaint of Petrarca was not therefore without reason, that Rome was in no place less known than in Rome itself[n].

Researches after the remains of antiquity.

In tracing the vicissitudes which the arts have experienced, we observe with pleasure, that

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[m] Hoc videbitur levius fortasse, sed me maximè, movet, quod his subjiciam; ex innumeris ferme colossis, statuisque tum marmoreis, tum æneis (nam argenteas atque aureas minimè miror fuisse conflatas) viris illustribus ob virtutem positis, ut omittam varia signa, voluptatis atque artis causa publicè ad spectaculum collocata, marmoreas quinque tantùm, quatuor in Constantini thermis; duas stantes ponè equos, Phidiæ et Praxitelis opus; duas recubantes; quintam in foro martis statuam, quæ hodie Martis fori nomen tenet; atque æneam solam equestrem deauratam, quæ est ad Basilicam Lateranensem, Septimio Severo dicatam, tantùm videmus superesse. *Pog. de varietate Fortunæ, p.* 20. The equestrian statue to which Poggio adverts, as that of Sep. Severus, is now recognised as the statue of Marcus Aurelius.

[n] Qui enim hodie ignari rerum Romanorum sunt quàm Romani cives? Invitus dico, nusquam minus Roma cognoscitur quam Romæ.

Epist. Fam. lib. vi. *Ep.* 2.

that the same persons who signalized themselves by their attention to preserve the writings of the ancient authors, were those to whom posterity is indebted for the restoration of a better taste in the arts. Petrarca himself is one of the first who displayed a marked attention to the remains of antiquity°. On his interview with the emperour Charles IV. at Mantua, he presented to that monarch a considerable number of coins, which he had himself collected; at the

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Petrarca.

° The famous Cola di Rienzi, who called himself Tribune of Rome, and attempted in the fourteenth century to establish the ancient republick, was, as well as his friend and panegyrist Petrarca, a great admirer of the remains of antiquity. It is not indeed improbable, as Tiraboschi conjectures, that the indulgence of this taste first incited him to his romantick project. The character of Rienzi is given by a contemporary author in the following terms, which may serve as a curious specimen of the Italian language: "*Fo da soa joventutine* "*nutricato de latte de eloquentia, bono Grammatico, meliore* "*Rettorico, Autorista bravo. Deh como e quanto era veloce* "*leitore! Moito usava Tito Livio, Seneca, e Tullio, e* "*Balerio Massimo: moito li dilettava le magnificentie de Julio* "*Cesare raccontare. Tutto lo die se speculava negl' intagli* "*de marmo, li quali jaccio intonno a Roma. Non era aitri* "*che esse che sapesse lejere li antichi pataffij. Tutte scritture* "*antiche volgarrizzava; queste figure de marmo justamente* "*interpretava.*"

Tirab. Storia della Let. Ital. v. v. *p.* 314. *Mem. pour la vie de Petr. v.* ii. *p.* 335.

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the same time assuring him, that he would not have bestowed them on any other person, and, with a degree of freedom which does him honour, recommending to the emperour, whilst he studied the history, to imitate the virtues of the persons there represented[p]. Lorenzo de' Medici, brother of Cosmo, distinguished himself not only by his assiduity in collecting the remains of ancient authors, but also by a decided predilection for works of taste, in the acquisition of which he emulated the celebrity of his brother[q]. From the funeral oration pronounced by Poggio on the death of Niccolo Niccoli, to whom the cause of literature is perhaps more indebted than to any individual who held merely a private station, we learn, that he was highly delighted with paintings and pieces of sculpture, of which he had collected a greater number, and of more exquisite workmanship, than any person of his time;

Lorenzo de' Medici, brother of Cosmo.

Niccolo Niccoli.

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[p] Ecce (inquit) Cæsar, quibus successisti; ecce quos imitari studeas, et mirari, ad quorum formulam, atque imaginem, te componas, quos præter te unum nulli hominum daturus eram. *Epist. Fam. lib.* x.

[q] Erat enim (Laurentius) ditissimus agri, ditissimusque auri, atque pretiosæ vestis, et universæ supellectilis, signis, tabulis pictis, vasis cælatis, margaritis, libris, mirum in modum affluit, &c.

Ant. Tudertani Orat. in Ep. Amb. Trev.

time; and that visiters thronged to see them, not as to a private house, but as to a publick exhibition[r]. Nor was Poggio himself less attentive to the discovery and acquisition of these precious remains[s]. "My chamber," says he, "is surrounded with busts in marble, "one of which is whole and elegant. The "others are indeed mutilated, and some of "them are even noseless, yet they are such "as may please a good artist. With these, "and some other pieces which I possess, I "intend to ornament my country seat." In a letter from Poggio to Francesco da Pistoia, a monk who had travelled to Greece in search of antiquities, we have a much more explicit instance

Poggio Bracciolini.

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[r] Delectabatur admodum tabulis et signis ac variis colaturis priscorum more. Plura enim prope solus atque exquisitiora habebat quam ceteri fere omnes. Ad quæ visenda multi alliciebantur, ut non privato aliquo in loco, sed in Theatro quodam collocata ac exposita esse affirmares. *Poggii Op. p.* 276.

[s] "Effectus sum," says he, in his jocular style, "admodum capitosus. Id quale sit, scire cupis? Habeo "cubiculum refertum capitibus marmoreis, inter quæ "unum est elegans, integrum: alia truncis naribus, "sed quæ vel bonum artificem delectent. His et non-"nullis signis quæ procuro, ornare volo Academiam "meam Valdarninam, quo in loco quiescere est animus," &c. *Poggii Epist. ad Nic. Nicol.*

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instance of the ardour with which he pursued this object[t]. "By your letters from Chios," says Poggio, "I learn that you have procured "for me three busts in marble, one of Minerva, "another of Jupiter, a third of Bacchus. These "letters afforded me great satisfaction, for I am "delighted beyond expression with pieces of "sculpture. I am charmed with the skill of "the artist, when I see marble so wrought as "to imitate Nature herself. You also inform "me that you have obtained a head of Apollo, "and you add from Virgil,

"*Miros ducent de marmore vultus.*

"Believe me, my friend, you cannot confer a "greater favour on me than by returning laden "with such works, by which you will abun- "dantly gratify my wishes. Different persons "labour under different disorders; that which "principally affects me is an admiration of "these productions of eminent sculptors, to "which I am perhaps more devoted than be- "comes a man who may pretend to some share "of learning. Nature herself, it is true, must "always excel these her copies; yet I must be "allowed to admire that art, which can give "such

[t] *App. No.* LXXII.

" such expression to inert materials, that no- CHAP.
" thing but breath seems to be wanting. Exert IX.
" yourself therefore, I beseech you, to collect,
" either by entreaties or rewards, whatever you
" can find that possesses any merit. If you can
" procure a complete figure, *triumphatum est.*"
Being informed by Francesco, that a Rhodian named Suffretus had in his possession a considerable number of antique sculptures, Poggio addressed a letter to him, earnestly requesting to be favoured with such specimens from his valuable collection as he might think proper to spare, and assuring him, that his kindness should be remunerated by the earliest opportunity[n]. In the same earnest style, and for the same purpose, he addressed himself to Andreolo Giustiniano, a Venetian, then residing in Greece. Induced by his pressing entreaties, both Suffretus and Giustiniano intrusted to the monk some valuable works; but, to the great disappointment of Poggio, he betrayed the confidence reposed in him, and, under the pretext that he had been robbed of them in his voyage, defrauded Poggio of the chief part of his treasures, which, as it afterwards appeared, he presented to Cosmo de' Medici. The indignation

[n] *Appx. No.* LXXIII.

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tion of Poggio on this occasion is poured forth in a letter to Giustiniano, whose liberality he again solicits, and which he professes to have in some degree repaid, by obtaining for him from the pope a dispensation to enable his daughter to marry[v]; thus sacrilegiously, though almost excusably, bartering the favours of the church, for the objects of his favourite study, and the gratification of his taste.

Collection of antiques formed by Cosmo.

The riches of Cosmo de' Medici, and the industry of Donatello[w], united to give rise to the celebrated collection of antiquities, which, with considerable additions, was transmitted by Piero to his son Lorenzo, and is now denominated the *Museum Florentinum*. By an estimate or account taken by Piero on the death of his father, it appears that these pieces amounted in value to more than 28,000 florins[x]. But it was

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[v] *App. No.* LXXIV.

[w] Egli (Donato) fu potissima cagione che a Cosimo de' Medici si destasse la volontà dell' introdurre a Fiorenza le antichità, che sono ed erano in casa Medici, le quali tutte di sua mano acconciò.

Vasar. vita di Donato.

[x] *Fabr. in vitâ Cosm. Adnot. & Monum. p.* 231. *v. App. No.* LXXV.

was reserved for Lorenzo to enrich this collection with its most valuable articles, and to render it subservient to its true purpose, that of inspiring in his countrymen a correct and genuine taste for the arts. CHAP. IX.

Augmented by Lorenzo.

Of the earnestness with which Lorenzo engaged in this pursuit, some instances have been already adduced[y]. "Such an admirer was he," says Valori[z], "of all the remains of antiquity, "that there was not any thing with which he "was more delighted. Those who wished to "oblige him were accustomed to collect, from "every part of the world, medals and coins, "estimable for their age or their workmanship, "statues, busts, and whatever else bore the "stamp of antiquity. On my return from "Naples," adds he, "I presented him with "figures of Faustina and Africanus in marble, "and several other specimens of ancient art; "nor can I easily express with what pleasure "he received them." Having long desired to possess the resemblance of Plato, he was rejoiced beyond measure when Girolamo Roscio of Pistoia

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[y] *Vol.* I. *p.* 198. See also the letter from Politiano to Lorenzo. *Appx. No.* LI.

[z] *Valor. in Vitâ Laur. p.* 18.

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toia presented to him a figure in marble of his favourite philosopher, which was said to have been found among the ruins of the academy[a]. By his constant attention to this pursuit, and by the expenditure of considerable sums, he collected under his roof all the remains of antiquity that fell in his way, whether they tended to illustrate the history of letters or of arts[b]. His acknowledged acquaintance with these productions induced the celebrated Fra Giocondo, of Verona, the most industrious antiquarian of his time, to inscribe to him his collection of ancient inscriptions, of which Politiano, who was a competent judge of the subject, speaks with high approbation[c].

Lorenzo establishes a school for the study of the antique.

But it is not the industry, the liberality, or the judgment shown by Lorenzo in forming his magnificent

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[a] In the diligent researches made at the instance of Lorenzo for the discovery of ancient manuscripts, his agents frequently met with curious specimens of art. The inventory of the books purchased by Giovanni Lascar, from one Nicolo di Jacopo da Siena concludes with particularizing a marble statue. This contract and inventory are yet preserved in MS. in the archives of the *Palazzo Vecchio* at Florence. *Filz.* lxxxi. *No.* 26.

[b] *Valor. in vitâ Laur. p.* 18.

[c] *Polit. Miscell. c.* 77.

magnificent collection, so much as the important purpose to which he destined it, that entitles him to the esteem of the professors and admirers of the arts. Conversant from his youth with the finest forms of antiquity, he perceived and lamented the inferiority of his contemporary artists, and the impossibility of their improvement upon the principles then adopted. He determined therefore to excite among them, if possible, a better taste, and by proposing to their imitation the remains of the ancient masters, to elevate their views beyond the forms of common life, to the contemplation of that ideal beauty which alone distinguishes works of art from mere mechanical productions. With this view he appropriated his gardens, adjacent to the monastery of S. Marco, to the establishment of a school or academy for the study of the antique, and furnished the different buildings and avenues with statues, busts, and other pieces of ancient workmanship. Of these he appointed the sculptor Bertoldo, the favourite pupil of Donatello, but who was then far advanced in years, superintendent. The attention of the higher rank of his fellow-citizens was incited to these pursuits by the example of Lorenzo; that of the lower class, by his liberality. To the latter he not only allowed competent stipends, whilst they attended to their studies,

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Michelagnolo Buonarroti.

To this institution, more than to any other circumstance, we may, without hesitation ascribe the sudden and astonishing proficiency which, towards the close of the fifteenth century, was evidently made in the arts, and which commencing at Florence, extended itself in concentrick circles to the rest of Europe. The gardens of Lorenzo de' Medici are frequently celebrated by the historian of the painters, as the nursery of men of genius[e]; but if they had produced

[d] *Vasari, vita di Torrigiano, e di Michelagnolo, &c.*

[e] Vasari adverts also to this establishment in his *Ragionamenti*. "Lorenzo aveva fatto fare il Giardino, "ch' è ora in su la piazza di San Marco, solamente "perchè lo teneva pieno di figure antiche di marmo, e "pitture assai, e tutte eccellenti, solo per condurre una "scuola di giovani, i quali alla scultura, pittura, e archi-"tettura attendessino a imparare, sotto la custodia di "Bertoldo scultore, già discepolo di Donatello, i quali "giovani, tutti o la maggior parte furono eccellenti; "fra quali fu uno il nostro Michelagnolo Buonarroti, "che è stato lo splendore, la vita, e la grandezza della "scultura, pittura, e architettura, avendo voluto mos-"trare il cielo, che non poteva, nè dovèva nascere, se "non sotto questo magnifico e illustre uomo, per lassar "la sua patria ereditaria, e il mondo di tante onorate "opere,

produced no other artist than Michelagnolo Buonarroti, they would sufficiently have answered the purposes of their founder. It was here that this great man began to imbibe that spirit, which was destined to effect a reformation in the arts, and which he could perhaps have derived from no other source[f]. Of a noble, but reduced family, he had been placed by his father when young, under the tuition of the painter Ghirlandajo, from whom Lorenzo, desirous of promoting his new establishment, requested

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" opere, quante si veggono di lui oggi, e di molti altri " che io ho viste, di cotesta scuola onorata."

Vas. Ragionamenti, fi. 75.

[f] Mengs, on several occasions, attributes the superiour excellence of Michelagnolo to the same favourable circumstance. " Michelagnolo, approfittandosi delle statue " raccolte dai Medici, aprì gli occhi, e connobbe che gli " antichi avean tenuta una certa arte nell' imitare la " verità, con cui si faceva la imitazione più intelligibile, " e più bella, che nello stesso originale;" and again, after giving an historical account of the progress of the arts, he adds, " In quello stato di cose scappò un " raggio di quella stessa luce, che illuminò l' antica " Grecia, quando Michelagnolo, il quale col suo gran " talento avea già superato il Ghirlandajo, vide le cose " degli antichi Greci nella collezione del magnifico Lo- " renzo de' Medici."

Op. di Mengs, vol. ii. *fi.* 99. 109.

CHAP. IX. requested that he would permit two of his pupils to pursue their studies in his gardens; at the same time expressing his hopes, that they would there obtain such instruction, as would not only reflect honour on the institution, but also on themselves and on their country. The students who had the good fortune to be thus selected were Michelagnolo and Francesco Granacci[g]. On the first visit of Michelagnolo, he found in the gardens his future adversary, Torrigiano, who, under the directions of Bertoldo, was modelling figures in clay. Michelagnolo applied himself to the same occupation, and his work soon afterwards attracted the attention of Lorenzo, who, from these early specimens, formed great expectations of his talents. Encouraged by such approbation, he began to cut in

[g] Dolendosi adunque Lorenzo, che amor grandissimo portava alla pittura, e alla scultura, che ne' suoi tempi non si trovassero scultori celebrati, e nobili, come si trovavano molti pittori di grandissimo pregio, e fama, deliberò di fare una scuola; e per questo chiese a Domenico Ghirlandajo, che se in bottega sua avesse de' suoi giovani, che inclinati fossero a ciò, gli inviasse al giardino, dove egli desiderava di essercitarli e creargli in una maniera, che onorasse se, e lui, e la città sua. Laonde da Domenico gli furono per ottimi giovani dati fra gli altri Michelagnolo, e Francesco Granacci.

Vasar. vita di Michelagn.

in marble the head of a fawn, after an antique sculpture[h], which, though unaccustomed to the chisel, he executed with such skill as to astonish Lorenzo; who, observing that he had made some intentional deviations from the original, and that in particular he had represented the lips smoother, and had shown the tongue and teeth, remarked to him, with his accustomed jocularity, that he should have remembered that old men seldom exhibit a complete range of teeth. The docile artist, who paid no less respect to the judgment, than to the rank of Lorenzo, was no sooner left to himself, than he struck out one of the teeth, giving to the part the appearance of its having been lost by age[i]. On his next visit, Lorenzo was equally delighted with the disposition and the genius of his young pupil, and sending for his

[h] This early specimen of the genius of Michelagnolo is yet preserved in the Medicean gallery at Florence, in the keeper's room, and is equal, says Bottari, to a piece of Grecian workmanship; it has been engraved and published by Gori, in Condivi's life of Michelagnolo; but, as Bottari observes, "poco felicemente, e con gran pre-"giudizio dell' originale." *v. Bottari, not. ut supr.*

[i] *Condivi, vita di Michelagnolo, p.* 5, *&c.*

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his father, not only took the son under his particular protection, but made such a provision for the old man, as his age and the circumstances of his numerous family required[k]. From this time till the death of Lorenzo, which included an interval of four years, Michelagnolo constantly resided in the palace of the Medici, and sat at the table of Lorenzo, among his most honoured guests; where, by a commendable regulation, the troublesome distinctions of rank were abolished, and every person took his place in the order of his arrival. Hence the young artist found himself at once associated, on terms of equality, with all that was illustrious and learned in Florence, and formed those connexions and friendships which, if they do not create, are at least necessary to promote and

Resides with Lorenzo.

[k] We learn from the narrative of Condivi, who relates these circumstances with insufferable minuteness, that when Lodovico, the father of Michelagnolo, encouraged by the kindness of Lorenzo, requested an office in the *Dogana* or customhouse, *in the place of Marco Pucci*, Lorenzo, who intended to provide him with a much better establishment, replied, laying his hand on his shoulder, *Tu sarai sempre povero.* He gave him, however, the office for which he applied, which was worth eight scudi per month, *poco più o meno*, says the accurate historian. *Condiv. ut sup.*

and reward superiour talents[l]. His leisure hours were passed in contemplating the intaglios, gems, and medals, of which Lorenzo had collected an astonishing number, whence he imbibed that taste for antiquarian researches, which was of essential service to him in his more immediate studies, and which he retained to the close of his life[m]. CHAP. IX.

Whilst Michelagnolo was thus laying the sure foundation of his future fame, and giving daily proofs of his rapid improvement, he formed an intimacy with Politiano, who resided under the same roof, and who soon became warmly Associates with Politiano.

[l] Lorenzo fece dare a Michelagnolo una buona camera in casa, dandogli tutte quelle comodità, ch' egli desiderava, nè altrimenti trattandolo sì in altro, sì nella sua mensa, che da figliuolo: alla quale, come d' un tal' uomo, sedeano ogni giorno personaggi nobilissimi e di grande affare. Ed essendovi questa usanza, che quei, che da principio si trovavano presenti, ciascheduno appresso il magnifico secondo il suo grado sedesse, non si movendo di luogo, per qualunque dipoi sopraggiunto fosse; avenne bene spesso, che Michelagnolo sedette sopra i figliuoli di Lorenzo, ed altre persone pregiate, di che tal casa di continuo fioriva ed abbondava, &c.

Cond. ut supr.

[m] *Condiv. ut supr.*

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warmly attached to his interests. At his recommendation, Michelagnolo executed a *basso-relievo* in marble, the subject of which is the battle of the Centaurs. This piece yet ornaments the dwelling of one of his descendants; and, although not wholly finished, displays rather the hand of an experienced master, than that of a pupil. But its highest commendation is, that it stood approved even in the riper judgment of the artist himself; who, although not indulgent to his own productions, did not hesitate, on seeing it some years afterwards, to express his regret that he had not entirely devoted himself to this branch of art[n]. The death of Lorenzo too soon deprived him of his protector. Piero, the son of Lorenzo, continued indeed to show to him the same marks of kindness which his father had uniformly done; but that prodigality, which so speedily dissipated his authority, his fortune, and his fame, was extended even to his amusements; and the talents of Michelagnolo, under the patronage of Piero, instead of impressing on brass or on marble

[n] Così la impressa gli succedette, che mi rammenta udirlo dire, che quando la rivede, cognosse quanto torto egli abbia fatto alla natura, a non seguitar prontamente l' arte della scultura, facendo giudizio per quell' opera, quanto potesse riuscire. *Cond. vita di M. A.*

marble the forms of immortality, were condemned to raise a statue of snow[o]! Nor was this intercourse of long continuance; for Piero, instead of affording support to others, was soon obliged to seek, in foreign countries, a shelter for himself.

Advantages possessed by Michelagnolo over his predecessors.

The history of Michelagnolo forms that of all the arts which he professed. In him sculpture, painting, and architecture, seem to have been personified. Born with talents superiour to his predecessors, he had also a better fate. Ghiberti, Donatello, Verocchio, were all men of genius, but they lived during the gentile state of the art[p]. The light had now risen, and his

[o] Essendo in Firenze venuta dimolta neve, Pier de' Medici, figliuol maggiore di Lorenzo, che nel medesimo luogo del padre era restato, ma non nella medesima grazia, volendo, come giovane, far fare nel mezzo della sua corte una statua di neve si ricordò di Michelagnolo, e fattolo cercare, gli fece far la statua, &c. *Condiv. p.* 8. This statue was a just emblem of the fortunes of its founder.

[p] Michelagnolo, ch' ebbe sì grande ingegno, non trasse dal suo proprio fondo la sua arte, nè con quello solo avrebbe trovata la strada di uscir da' limiti di quello stile secco, e servile, che fin allora regnava in Italia; e senza un grande studio, nè senza l' osservazione delle statue antiche, non sarebbe stato forse che uguale a un Donatello, e a un Ghiberti. *Opere di Mengs, v.* ii. *p.* 189.

CHAP. IX. his young and ardent mind, conversant with the finest forms of antiquity, imbibed, as its genuine source, a relish for their excellence. With the specimens of ancient art, the depositories of ancient learning were unlocked to him, and of these also he made no inconsiderable use. As a poet he is entitled to rank high amongst his countrymen; and the triple wreaths of painting, sculpture, and architecture, with which his disciples decorated his tomb, might, without exaggeration, have been interwoven with a fourth[q].

His sculptures.

Of the sculptures of Michelagnolo, some yet remain in an unfinished state, which strikingly display the comprehension of his ideas and the rapidity of his execution. Such are the

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[q] The poems of Michelagnolo were published by his great-nephew Michelagnolo Buonarroti il Giovane, at Florence in 1623, and are ranked with the *Testi di Lingua* of Italian literature. They were again reprinted at Florence in 1726, with the *Lezzioni* of Benedetto Varchi, and Mario Guiducci, on some of his sonnets. Tenhove has justly appreciated their merits. "Les sonnets et les "*Canzoni* de Michelange ne sont point chargés d' orne- "mens ambitieux; ils se ressentent de l' austère simpli- "cité de son génie: cependant rien ne le fait autant "valoir, que la main dont ils sont partie."

Mem. Gen. liv. xix. *p.* 317.

the bust of Brutus, and the statue of a female figure, in the gallery at Florence. In the latter the chisel has been handled with such boldness, as to induce a connoisseur of our own country to conjecture that it would be necessary, in the finishing, to restore the cavities[r]. Perhaps a more involuntary homage was never paid to genius, than that which was extorted from the sculptor Falconet, who having presumed upon all occasions to censure the style of Michelagnolo, without having had an opportunity of inspecting any of his works, at length obtained a sight of two of his statues, which were brought into France by cardinal Richelieu. *I have seen Michelagnolo*, exclaimed the French artist; *he is terrifick*[s].

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The labours of the painter are necessarily transitory; for so are the materials that compose them. In a few years Michelagnolo will be known, like an ancient artist, only by his works in marble. Already it is difficult to determine,

[r] *Richardson, Description des Tabl. &c. vol.* iii. *p.* 87.

[s] "J'ai vu Michelange; *Il est effrayant.*" *Falcon. ap. Tenh.* The pieces which occasioned this exclamation were two of the statues intended to compose a part of the monument of Julius II.

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determine, whether his reputation be enhanced or diminished by the sombre representations of his pencil in the Pauline and Sixtine chapels, or by the few specimens of his cabinet pictures, now rarely to be met with, and exhibiting only a shadow of their original excellence. But the chief merit of this great man is not to be sought for in the remains of his pencil, nor even in his sculptures, but in the general improvement of the publick taste which followed his astonishing productions. If his labours had perished with himself, the change which they effected in the opinions and the works of his contemporaries would still have entitled him to the first honours of the art. Those who from ignorance, or from envy, have endeavoured to depreciate his productions, have represented them as exceeding in their forms and attitudes the limits and the possibilities of nature,—as a race of beings, the mere creatures of his own imagination; but such criticks would do well to consider, whether the great reform to which we have alluded could have been effected by the most accurate representations of common life, and whether any thing short of that ideal excellence which he only knew to imbody, could have accomplished so important a purpose. The genius of Michelagnolo was a leaven which was to operate on an immense and heterogeneous mass,

mass, the salt intended to give a relish to insipidity itself; it was therefore active, penetrating, energetick, so as not only effectually to resist the contagious effects of a depraved taste, but to communicate a portion of its spirit to all around. CHAP. IX.

Of the contemporary artists of Michelagnolo, such only are entitled to high commendation as accompanied his studies, or availed themselves of his example. Among these appears the divine Raffaello; second to his great model in that grandeur of design which elevates the mind, but superiour to him in that grace which interests the heart; and endowed, if not with vigour sufficient alone to effect a reform, yet with talents the best calculated to promote its progress[t]. It is well known that the works of this exquisite master form two distinct classes, those which he painted before, and those which he painted after he had caught from the new Prometheus a portion of the ethereal fire—those of the scholar of Perugino, and of the competitor Raffaello d'Urbino.

[t] Raffaello stesso ci ha lasciate nelle sue opere le tracce de' suoi studj; e senza le lezioni di Fra Bartolommeo, e la vista delle opere di Michelagnolo, e delle cose antiche, non goderemmo oggi le sue maravigliose pitture. *Op. di Menge, v.* ii. *p.* 189.

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competitor of Michelagnolo. "Happy age!" exclaims, with more than common animation, the historian of the painters, "and happy "artists, for so I may well denominate you, "who have had the opportunity of purifying "your eyes at so clear a fountain; who have "found your difficulties removed, your crooked "paths made straight by so wonderful an artist: "know then, and honour the man who has "enabled you to distinguish between truth and "falsehood, and let your gratitude be shown "in returning your thanks to heaven, and in "imitating Michelagnolo in all things[u]."

Genius

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[u] *Vasari vita di Michelagnolo.* Gianfrancesco Grazzini, called *Il Lasca*, also celebrates his countryman in the true Florentine idiom:

Giotto fu il primo, ch' alla dipintura,
Già lungo tempo morta, desse vita.
E Donatello messe la scultura
Nel suo dritto sentier, ch' era smarrita:
Così l' architettura
Storpiata, e guasta, alle man' de' Tedeschi,
Anzi quasi basita,
Da Pippo Brunelleschi,
Solenne Architettor, fu messa in vita;
Onde gloria infinita
Meritar questi tre spirti divini,
Nati in Firenze e nostri cittadini.
E di queste tre arti, i Fiorentini

Han

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Genius is ever obnoxious to that criticism which mediocrity escapes; nor has this test been wanting to the merits of Michelagnolo. The parasites of a vicious court, and a corrupt age, have not hesitated to charge him with indecency, in introducing naked figures in his celebrated picture of the last judgment. This accusation was made even in his life-time, by one who called himself his friend, and who saw no impropriety in representing it as proceeding from the obscene lips of Pietro Aretino[v]. It soon however became so prevalent, that

Michelagnolo unjustly censured.

Han sempre poi tenuto il vanto e'l pregio.
Dopo questo, l' egregio
Michelagnol divin, dal cielo eletto,
Pittor, scultore, architettor perfetto,
Che dove i primi tre maestri eccellenti
Gittaro i fondamenti,
Alle tre nobil' arti ha posto il tetto.
Onde meritamente,
Chiamato è dalla gente
Vero maestro, e padre del disegno, &c.
Il Lasca, sop. la dipintura della Cupola.

[v] In the dialogue of Lodovico Dolce on painting, entitled *L' Aretino*—Aretino, who is supposed to speak the sentiments of the author, observes, "Chi ardirà di "affermar, che stia bene, che nella chiesa di San Pietro, "prencipe degli apostoli, in una Roma, ove concurre "tutto

CHAP. IX. that in the pontificate of Paul IV. it was in contemplation to destroy this astonishing picture, which was at last only preserved by the expedient of covering those parts which were supposed to be likely to excite in the minds of the depraved spectators ideas unsuitable to the solemnity of the place. The painter who undertook this office was ever afterwards distinguished by the name of *Il Braghettone*. These opprobrious charges were renewed, in the succeeding century, by a man of talents and celebrity, who united, like Michelagnolo, the character of a painter and a poet, without having one idea in common with him[w]. But what shall we say of

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" tutto il mondo, nella cappella del Pontefice, il quale, " come ben dice il Bembo, in terra ne assembra Dio, si " veggano dipinti tanti ignudi, che dimostrano dishones- " tamente dritti e reversi: cosa nel vero, (favellando " con ogni sommessione,) di quel santissimo luogo in- " degna." Fabrini, the other colloquialist, justifies Michelagnolo, by alleging the example of Raffaello, who is said to have designed the lascivious prints engraved by Marcantonio Raimondi, under which the same Aretino wrote his infamous verses; but it is easy to see that such a justification is an aggravation of the charge.

Dolce, Dialog. p. 236. *Ed. Flor.* 1735.

[w] Salvator Rosa, in his satire entitled *La Pittura*, relating instances of the arrogance and pride of his predecessors,

of an artist who could mingle with the contemplation of a subject so interesting to all mankind, which unites every thing terrible and sublime, and CHAP. IX.

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decessors, introduces the well-known story of the critick *Biagio*, who, having censured the famous picture of the last judgment, was, in return, represented by Michelagnolo in a group of the damned. According to Salvator, Biagio thus addressed the painter:

Michel Agnolo mio, non parlo in gioco,
Questo che dipingete è un gran giudizio,
Ma del giudicio voi n' avete poco.
Io non vi tasso intorno al artifizio,
Ma parlo del costume, in cui mi pare
Che il vostro gran saper si cangi in vizio.
Sapevi pur che il figlio di Noè,
Perchè scoperse le vergogne al padre,
Tirò l'ira di Dio sovra di sè;
E voi, senza temer Christo e la Madre
Fate, che mostrin le vergogne parte,
Infin de' Santi qui l'intiere squadre,

and that it may not be imagined that Salvator did not himself approve the sentiments of the critick, he adds,

In udire il pittor queste proposte,
Divenuto di rabbia rosso, e nero,
Non potè proferir le sue risposte;
Nè potendo di lui l'orgoglio altero
Sfogare il suo furor per altre bande,
Dipinse nell' inferno il Cavaliero.

Satir. di Salv. Rosa. Ed. Lond. 1791.

CHAP. IX. and absorbs all other passions, an idea that can only have a relation to the decorums of modern life, and to that factitious decency which, by affecting concealment, acknowledges a prurience of imagination, to which true taste, as well as true modesty, is a stranger?

Other artists favoured by Lorenzo.

The favours of Lorenzo de' Medici were not, however, exclusively bestowed. Although he well knew how to appreciate and to reward extraordinary excellence, he was not inattentive to the just claims of those who made a proficiency in any branch of the arts. Where the indication of talents appeared, he was solicitous to call them into action, to accelerate their progress, and to repay their success. "It is "highly deserving of notice," says Vasari, "that all those who studied in the gardens of "the Medici, and were favoured by Lorenzo, "became most excellent artists, which can "only be attributed to the exquisite judgment "of this great patron of their studies, who "could not only distinguish men of genius, "but had both the will and the power to "reward them[x]." By his kindness the eminent

Gianfrancesco Rustici.

[x] 'E gran cosa ad ogni modo, che tutti coloro, i quali furono nella scuola del Giardino de' Medici, e favoriti dal

nent sculptor Rustici was placed under the care of Andrea Verocchio[y], where he formed an intimacy with the celebrated Lionardo da Vinci; but although he availed himself of the friendship and the instructions of this wonderful man, he acknowledged Lorenzo as the parent of his studies[z]. Francesco Granacci, the fellow-student of Michelagnolo, partook also of the favour of Lorenzo, and was occasionally employed by him in preparing the splendid pageants with which he frequently amused the citizens of

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Francesco Granacci.

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dal Mag. Lorenzo vecchio, furono tutti eccellentissimi; la qual cosa d'altronde non può essere avvenuta, se non dal molto, anzi infinito giudizio di quel nobilissimo signore, vero Mecenate degli uomini virtuosi; il quale come sapeva conoscere gl' ingegni, e spirti elevati, così poteva e sapeva riconoscergli e premiargli.

Vasari vita del Rustici.

[y] Portandosi dunque benissimo Giovanfrancesco Rustici, cittadin Fiorentino, nel disegnare, e fare di terra, mentre era giovinetto, fu da esso magnifico Lorenzo, il quale lo conobbe spiritoso, e di bello e buon ingegno, messo a stare, perchè imparasse, con Andrea del Verocchio, &c. *Ibid.*

[z] Essendo poi tornata in Fiorenza la Famiglia de' Medici, Il Rustico si fece conoscere al Cardinale Giovanni, per creatura di Lorenzo suo padre, e fu ricevuto con molte carezze. *Ibid.*

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of Florence; in the decoration of which Granacci displayed uncommon taste[a]. The reputation acquired by the pupils of S. Marco soon extended beyond the limits of Italy. At the request of the king of Portugal, Lorenzo sent into that country Andrea Contucci, where he left various monuments of his talents in sculpture and architecture[b]. The encouragement afforded by him to the professors of every branch of the arts, may be estimated in some degree by the numerous pieces executed at his expense by the first masters of the time, accounts of which are occasionally dispersed through the voluminous work of Vasari. Like his ancestor Cosmo, Lorenzo often forgot the superiority of the patron

Andrea Contucci.

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[a] Francesco Granacci——fu uno di quelli, che dal Magnifico Lorenzo de' Medici fu messo a imparare nel suo giardino, &c. E perchè era molto gentile, e valeva assai in certe galanterie, che per feste di carnovale si facevano nella città, fu sempre in molte cose simili dal Magnifico Lorenzo de' Medici adoperato.

Vasari vita di Fr. Granac.

[b] Per queste, e per l'altre opere d'Andrea, divulgatosi il nome suo, fu chiesto al magnifico Lorenzo vecchio de' Medici, nel cui giardino avea, come si è detto, atteso a gli studj del disegno, dal re di Portagallo, perchè mandatogli da Lorenzo, lavorò per quel re molte opere di scultura, d' architettura, e particularmente un bellissimo pallazzo, &c. *Vasar. vita di Contucci.*

patron in the familiarity of the friend, and not only excused but delighted in the capriciousness which frequently distinguishes men of talents. In this number was Niccolo Grosso, a Florentine citizen, who wrought ornaments in iron with extraordinary skill. Conscious of his merits, Niccolo resolved to labour only for those who paid him ready money, referring his employers to the sign suspended at his door, which represented books of account destroyed in the flames. Lorenzo, desirous of presenting to some of his powerful friends abroad a specimen of Florentine ingenuity, called upon Niccolo to engage him to execute for him a piece of his workmanship; but the surly artisan, who was busy at his anvil, instead of acknowledging the honour intended him, bluntly told Lorenzo that he had other customers who, having first applied, must be first served. The invincible pertinacity of Niccolo, in refusing to work till he had received his usual deposite, occasioned Lorenzo to give him the name of *Il Caparra*[c], by which he was ever afterwards generally known[d].

The

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[c] From *Arrha*, *Arrhabo*, a pledge, or earnest.

[d] *Vasari vita di Simone detto il Cronica.*

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Lorenzo encourages the study of architecture.

The study of architecture, as revived by Brunelleschi, received additional support from the encouragement afforded by Lorenzo de' Medici, who, to the munificence of his grandfather, superadded a knowledge of this science equal to that of a practical artist. At his instance, and often at his individual expense, the city of Florence was ornamented with a profusion of elegant buildings, as well for private residence, as publick purposes. Convinced that the art was founded on fixed and determined principles, which were only to be discovered in the labours of the ancients, he justly reprobated those professors who, neglecting the rules of Vitruvius, followed only the variable suggestions of their own fancy. Nor was he less severe on those who, without any previous knowledge of the art, conceived themselves equal to the task of conducting a building on an extensive scale, and, in the erection of their dwellings, chose to become their own architects. "Such people," said Lorenzo, "buy repent-"ance at too dear a rate[c]." Of this description was his relation, Francesco de' Medici, who having erected a large house at Maiano, and made

[c] Illos vel maxime reprehendere solebat quicumque in diem temere ædificarent, eos dicens *caro admodum emere pœnitentiam. Valor. in vitâ, p.* 63.

made several alterations in its progress, complained to Lorenzo of the great expense with which it had been attended: "That is not to "be wondered at," replied Lorenzo, "when, "instead of erecting your building from a "model, you draw your model from your build-"ing[f]." His superiour judgment in works of this kind was acknowledged on many occasions. Ferdinand, king of Naples, intending to build a palace, conceived no one more competent to direct him in the choice of a plan than Lorenzo. His assistance was also sought for on a similar occasion by the duke of Milan; and Filippo Strozzi, in the erection of a mansion, which in grandeur of design and richness of execution is not inferiour to a royal residence, availed himself greatly of his advice and directions[g]. It does not

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[f] *Valor. ut supra.*

[g] Multi enim multa regia ædificia de Laurentii consilio extruxere. In quibus Philippi Strocti̇æ insulares ædes, quæ amplitudine sua, et grata membrorum dispositione, totiusque ædificii venustate et magnificentia superant, sine ulla controversia, non solum privatas domos, sed principales et regias. Magno area constitit in urbe media: impendium ad centum aureorum millia accessurum putatur. De modulo Philippus Laurentium consuluit, qui quidem aderat omnibus super hac re operam suam cupientibus,

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not however appear, that Lorenzo on any occasion thought proper to dispense with the aid of those who had made this art their more immediate study. Having formed the intention of erecting his palace at Poggio-Cajano, he obtained designs from several of the best architects of the time, and amongst the rest from Giuliano, the son of Paolo Giamberto, whose model was preferred by Lorenzo, and under whose directions the building was carried on; but in the construction of the picturesque and singular flight of steps, which communicated to every part with such convenience, that a person might ascend or descend even on horseback, Lorenzo made use of a design of Stefano d'Ugolino, a painter of Siena, who died about the year 1350[h]. Lorenzo was desirous that the ceiling of the great hall should be formed by a single arch, but was apprehensive that it would not be practicable, on account of its extent. Giuliano was at that time erecting a residence for himself in Florence, where he took an opportunity of executing

Giuliano da San Gallo.

cupientibus, nec civilibus solum, sed etiam externis. *Valor. in vitâ, fl.* 63. For a particular account of this splendid residence, *v. Vasari vita di Simone detto il Cronica.*

[h] *Vasar. vita di Giuliano da San Gallo, v.* ii. *fl.* 78.

executing one in the manner suggested by Lorenzo, and succeeded so effectually as to remove his doubts on this head. The ceiling at Poggio-Cajano was accordingly completed, and is acknowledged to be the largest vaulted roof of modern workmanship that had then been seen[1]. The talents of this artist induced Lorenzo to recommend him to Ferdinand king of Naples, to whom he presented, on the part of Lorenzo, the model of an intended palace. His reception was highly honourable. On his departure Ferdinand supplied him with horses, apparel, and other valuable articles, amongst which was a silver cup containing several hundred ducats. Giuliano, whilst he declined accepting it, expressed a desire that the king would gratify him with some specimen of ancient art, from his extensive collection, which might be

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[1] Giuliano had before been employed by Lorenzo in fortifying the town of Castellana, when that place was attacked by the duke of Calabria, in which he rendered essential services to his patron. The Florentines were at that time very defective in the use of their artillery, which they scarcely ventured to approach, and which frequently occasioned fatal accidents to those who directed it; but the ingenuity of the young architect remedied this defect; in consequence of which the army of the duke was so severely cannonaded as to be obliged to raise the siege. *Vasar. ut supra.*

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be a proof of his approbation. Ferdinand accordingly presented him with a bust of the emperour Adrian, a statue of a female figure larger than life, and a sleeping Cupid; all of which Giuliano immediately sent to Lorenzo, who was no less pleased with the liberality of the artist, than with the acquisition of so valuable a treasure[k]. At the request of the celebrated Mariano Genazano, Lorenzo had promised to erect, without the gate of San Gallo at Florence, a monastery capable of containing one hundred monks. On the return of Giuliano to Florence, he engaged him in this work, whence he obtained the name of *San Gallo*, by which he was always afterwards distinguished[l]. Whilst this building was carrying forwards, Giuliano was also employed by Lorenzo in designing and erecting the extensive fortifications of Poggio Imperiale, preparatory to the founding a city on that

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[k] *Vasar. vita di Giuliano da San Gallo.*

[l] Giuliano remonstrated with Lorenzo on this alteration.—"By your calling me *San Gallo*," said he, "I shall "lose my name, and, instead of becoming respectable "by the antiquity of my family, I shall have to found it "anew."—"Surely," said Lorenzo, "it is more ho- "nourable to be the founder of a new family by your "own talents, than to rest your reputation on the merits "of others." *Vasar. ut supra.*

that spot, as was his intention[m]. To this artist, who arrived at great eminence in the ensuing century, and to his brother Antonio, architecture is indebted for the completion of the Tuscan order, as now established, and for considerable improvements in the Dorick. CHAP. IX.

Besides the many magnificent works begun under the immediate directions of Lorenzo, he sedulously attended to the completion of such buildings as had been left imperfect by his ancestors. On the church of S. Lorenzo, the building of which was begun by his great grandfather Giovanni, and continued by his grandfather Cosmo, he expended a large sum. At the request of Matteo Bosso he also completed the monastery begun by Brunelleschi at Fiesole[n], at the same time expressing his regret that he should have rendered it necessary to solicit him to do that which he conceived to be an indispensable duty[o].

Amongst

[m] *Vasar. ut supra.*

[n] The letter of Bosso, which was addressed to Lorenzo in the height of his prosperity, and touches upon many circumstances of his life and character, is given, from the *Recuperationes Fesulanæ*, in the Appendix, *No.* LXXVI.

[o] *Fabr. in vitâ. v.* i. *p.* 148.

CHAP. IX.

Attempts to renew the practice of Mosaick.

Amongst the various kinds of picturesque representation practised by the Greeks and Romans, and transmitted by them to after-times, is that of Mosaick[P]; a mode of execution which,

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P The lithostrata, or tessellated pavements of the Romans, being worked in a regular and mechanical manner were called *opus musivum*, *opera quæ ad amussim facta sunt*: hence the Italian *Musaico*, from which is derived our appellation of *Mosaick*; but like most of our other terms of art through the channel of the French, *Mosaique*.

When, instead of ornamenting their floors, the Romans began to decorate the walls of their apartments, the work was still characterized by the same term, as appears from the following passage, communicated to me by Dr. Parr: "Musiva quidem (ut docuit Salmasius, ad histo-" riam Augustam) proprie de hoc opere in parietibus et " cameris dicebantur, ut lithostrata et tessellata de pavi-" mentis; sed quia eadem ars erat, ipsomet fatente, nos, " ut et alii solent auctores, promiscue sumere non dubi-" tavimus. *Musiva*, *Musea*, et *Musia* vocabantur. Spar-" tianus in vita Pescennii Nigri, *hunc*, antequam ad " imperium perveniret, *in Commodianis hortis*, *in porticu* " *curva*, *pictum de Musivo fuisse ait*, *inter Commodi amicis-* " *simos*, *sacra Isidis ferentem*. Trebellius Pollio, in Tetrico " juniore: *Tetricorum domus hodieque extat in monte Cælio*, " *inter duos Lucos*, *contra Isium Metallinum*, *pulcherrima*, " *in qua Aurelianus pictus est utrique Tetrico prætextam* " *tribuens senatoriam dignitatem accipiens ab his sceptrum*: " *picta omnia de Museo*. Anastatius Bibliothecarius pas-" sim basilicarum Romæ meminit *Musivo* decoratum in " Leone

which, in its durability of form and permanency of colour, possesses distinguished advantages, being unaffected by drought or moisture, heat or cold, and perishing only with the building to which it has been originally attached. This art, during the middle ages, had experienced the same vicissitudes as attended all those with which it is so nearly connected[q]. Some attempts had, however, been made to restore it by Andrea Tafi, the contemporary of Giotto; and even Giotto himself had cultivated it, not without success, although the celebrated picture over the great

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" Leone IV. *Apsidemque ejus ex Musivo, aureo superin-* " *ducto colore glorifice decoravit. Apsides* græcis, idem ac " latinis *Fornices.*"

Pitisci, Lexicon Antiquitat. Roman. vol. ii. *p.* 242.

[q] There is, however, reason to believe, that the practice of Mosaick, although it had degenerated, had never been wholly intermitted. The church of S. Paolo fuori delle Mure at Rome is full of Mosaicks of the lower empire. There are also many in buildings of the exarchate at Ravenna. The church of St. Mark at Venice, built about the year 1100, has also many specimens, probably the work of Greek artists from Constantinople. The tombs of our kings Edward the Confessor and Henry III. in Westminster Abbey, the work, as Mr. Walpole has almost demonstrated, of Pietro Cavalini, certainly of a Petrus Romanus civis, bring us down to Giotto's time with scarcely an interval. For these remarks on the above passage I am indebted to Sir H. Englefield.

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great door of St. Peter at Rome, called the *Navicella di Giotto*, is said to be a more modern work, copied from a former one of that artist[r]. Lorenzo was desirous of introducing this mode of execution into more general practice. On expressing to Graffione, a Florentine painter, his intention of ornamenting with work of this kind the vault of a large cupola, the painter ventured to observe to him that he had not artists equal to the task: "We have money enough to make "them," replied Lorenzo; and although Graffione still continued incredulous[s], Lorenzo soon afterwards met with a person who suited his purpose in the painter Gherardo, who had generally applied himself to works in miniature. The specimen produced by Gherardo for the inspection of Lorenzo, was a head of S. Zenobio, with which he was so well pleased, that he resolved to enlarge the chapel of that saint at Florence, in order to give the artist an opportunity of exhibiting his talents in a wider field. With Gherardo he associated Domenico Ghirlandajo,

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[r] *Tenh. Mem. Geneal. liv.* vii. *p.* 131.

[s] Graffione, with that familiarity which the artists appear to have used towards Lorenzo, replied, "Eh "Lorenzo, i danari non fanni i maestri, ma i maestri "fanno i danari."

landajo, as a more complete master of design, and the work was commenced with great spirit. Vasari assures us, that if death had not interposed, there was reason to believe, from the part that was executed, that these artists would have performed wonderful things[t]. CHAP. IX.

Invention of engraving on copper.

But if the attempts made by Lorenzo to restore the practice of Mosaick were thus in a great degree frustrated, a discovery was made about the same period which proved an ample substitute for it, and which has given to the works of the painter that permanency which even the durability of Mosaick might not perhaps have supplied. This was the art of transferring to paper impressions from engravings on copper, or other metals; an invention which has tended more

[t] By whose death the further progress of this work was interrupted, may be doubted. The words of Vasari are, "Per lo che Gherardo, assotigliando l'ingegno, harebbe "fatto con Domenico mirabilissime cose, se la morte "non vi si fusse interposta; come si può giudicare dal "principio della detta capella, che rimase imperfetta." But, by a subsequent passage in the life of Ghirlandajo, it seems it was the death of Lorenzo that prevented the completion of the work. "——— come, per la morte "del predetto Magnifico Lorenzo, rimase imperfetta in "Fiorenza la Capella di S. Zanobi, comminciata a lavo-"rare di Musaico da Domenico in compagnia di Ghe-"rardo miniatore."

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more than any other circumstance to diffuse throughout Europe a just and general taste for the arts.

This discovery is attributed by the Italians to Maso, or Tomaso Finiguerra, a goldsmith of Florence, who being accustomed to engrave on different metals, for the purpose of inlaying them, occasionally tried the effects of his work, by taking off impressions, first on sulphur, and afterwards on paper, by means of a roller, in such a manner that the figures seemed to have been traced with a pen. It does not appear that Finiguerra ever applied this invention to any other purpose than that of ascertaining the progress of his work; nor have the researches of the most diligent inquirers discovered a single print that can with any degree of probability be attributed to him; but Baccio Baldini, another goldsmith, conceiving that this discovery might be applied to more important purposes, began to engrave on metals, solely with a view of transmitting impressions to paper. Possessing, however, no great skill in design, he prevailed on Sandro Botticello to furnish him with drawings suitable for his purpose. The concurrence of Antonio Pollajuoli, and Andrea Mantegna, carried the art to greater perfection. Of the works of the last-mentioned master many specimens

mens yet remain, which do credit to his talents. The beginning of the ensuing century produced a much superiour artist in Marcantonio Raimondi, by whose industry the numerous productions of Raffaello, the transcripts of his rich and creative mind, were committed to paper with an accuracy which he himself approved, and may serve as a standard to mark in future times the progress or the decline of the arts[u].

Whilst

[u] The credit of having given rise to this elegant and useful art has been contended for by different countries, and their various pretensions have been weighed and considered by many authors. It is, however, generally agreed, that it began with the goldsmiths, and was afterwards adopted by the painters. The union of these two professions has thus produced a third, which has risen to considerable importance. The Germans, who have disputed with the Italians the honour of the invention with the greatest degree of plausibility, have not in point of fact controverted the narrative given by the Italians of the rise of the art, nor brought forward any account of their own, but have simply endeavoured to shew that it was practised in Germany at an earlier period. Mr. Heineken asserts that the earliest prints engraved in Italy, that bear a date, are the maps to the edition of Ptolemy, printed at Rome in 1478; the earliest picturesque representations, those prefixed to some

CHAP. IX. Whilst the art of transferring to paper impressions from copper was thus first practised,

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some of the cantos of Dante in 1482; whilst he adduces instances of German execution that bear the date of 1466, by comparing the manner of which with other pieces, apparently of earlier workmanship, he conjectures that the art had its rise in Germany about the year 1440. *Idée Generale, p.* 232. *Non nostrum tantas componere lites.* I shall only observe, that little dependence is to be placed on conjectures from prints without a date, particularly those of German workmanship, as the artists of that country continued to produce them in the most rude and Gothick style, both as to design and execution, long after the beginning of the sixteenth century, when Albert Durer and Luca van Leyden had set them a better example. On the other hand, impartiality obliges me to remark, that Tiraboschi, who strenuously claims for his countrymen the merit of the discovery, has not discussed this subject with his usual accuracy. First, he is mistaken in asserting that Baldinucci fixes the commencement of the art in the beginning of the fifteenth century. *Storia della Lett. Ital. v.* ii. *p.* 2. *p.* 399. Baldinucci only says in general that the art had its beginning in the fifteenth century. "*Quest' arte ebbe suo principio nel secolo del* 1400." Secondly, on the authority of a document produced by Manni, he supposes that Tomaso Finiguerra, the inventer of the art, died prior to the year 1424; but both Vasari and Baldinucci inform us, that the Finiguerra in question was contemporary with Pollajuolo, who was only born in

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tised, that of engraving on gems and stones was again successfully revived. The predilection of Lorenzo de' Medici for the beautiful specimens of skill which the ancients have left in materials of this nature, has frequently been noticed[v]. Of those which once formed a part

Revival of engraving on gems and stones.

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in 1426. It is singular that this judicious author did not reflect how slight that evidence must be which rests merely on similarity of name, particularly in Florence, where, for the sake of distinction, it was often necessary to resort to the patronymicks for several generations. *v. Vasari, vite de' Pittori, passim. Baldinucci commincia-mento e progresso dell' arte dell' intagliare in Rame. Fir.* 1686. *Heineken Idée generale d'un Collection complette d'Estampes, &c.*

[v] The collection of antiques formed by Lorenzo is thus celebrated by a contemporary author:

Cælatum argento, vel fulvo quidquid in auro est
Ædibus hoc, LAURENS, vidimus esse tuis,
Praxitelis, Phœnicis, Aristonis, atque Myronis
Fingere tam doctæ quod potuere manus,
Cunachus, aut Mentor, Pythias, vel uterque Polycles
Lisippus quidquid, Callimachusque dedit.
Quæ collegisti miro virtutis amore
Magnanimum reddunt nomen ubique tuum.
Artificum monumenta foves, referuntur in auro,
Argento, tabulis, et lapide ora Deûm.

F. Camerlini, ap. Band. Cat. Bibl. Laur. v. iii. *p.* 545.

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part of his immense collection, some occasionally occur that seem to have been the objects of his more particular admiration, and bear upon some conspicuous part the name of their former proprietor, thus expressed, LAVR. MED[w]. Nor is it improbable that Michelagnolo, who passed among these treasures a considerable portion of his time, was indebted to the liberality of Lorenzo for the beautiful Intaglio which he is supposed to have worn as his seal[x].

The

[w] These letters appear on a cameo in onyx of different colours, representing the entry of Noah and his family into the ark, of which an engraving is given by Gori in his edition of the life of Michelagnolo by Condivi. Among the gems or cameos of this description, of which I have met with impressions, or *gessi*, are those of Diomed with the palladium, or a large oval cameo, in which the letters LAUR. MED. are engraved on the side of the rock or stone on which he sits—A centaur, with the letters engraved on the exergue—Dedalus fixing on the wings of Icarus; the inscription is on the pedestal upon which Icarus stands, extending his wings over the upper part of the piece; and lastly, the celebrated gem representing Apollo and Marsyas, of which a particular account is given by Mr. Tenhove.

[x] Chiaro documento si ha, che uno degli estimatori e raccoglitori intelligenti de' più preziosi avanzi dell' erudita

The protection and encouragement afforded by Lorenzo to every other branch of art, was not withheld from this his favourite department. From the early part of the fifteenth century, some specimens of the astonishing proficiency of the ancients in works of this nature had occasionally been discovered; and, as the publick taste improved, they were sought for with avidity, and only to be purchased at considerable prices. In the Pontificate of Martin V. and again in that of Paul II. some attempts had been made to rival, or at least to imitate, these productions; but the first artist whose name stands recorded in modern times, is Giovanni delle Corniuole, so called from his having generally exercised his skill upon

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erudita antichità, e di gioie intagliate da eccellenti Maestri greci, e di medaglie, e di altre simili rarità, fu il mag. Lorenzo, per tale celebrato, e riconosciuto dall' insigne Ezec. Spanemio nella Diss. i. *De præstan. et usu Numism. antiquor.* Nè è maraviglia se Michelagnolo potè acquistare la stupendissima gemma annulare, la quale passò poi nelle mani e nel tesoro del re Cristianissimo; e forse ch' anch' esso altre si fatte rarità averà acquistate de' più excellenti artefici greci.

Gori. Notiz. Storic. sopra la vita di Michelagn. di Condivi, p. 101.

CHAP. IX. upon the stone called a Cornelian. The museum of Lorenzo de' Medici was the school in which he studied. The proficiency which he made corresponded to the advantages he possessed, and answered the purposes which his liberal patron had in view. The numerous pieces of his workmanship in various sizes, and on various materials, were the admiration of all Italy. One of his most celebrated productions was the portrait of Savonarola, who was then in the meridian of his popularity at Florence. Giovanni immediately met with a formidable competitor in a Milanese, who also lost the name of his family in that of his art, and was called Domenico de' Camei. The likeness of Lodovico Sforza, engraved by Domenico in a large onyx, was considered as the most extraordinary specimen of modern skill. By these masters and their scholars, this elegant, but unobtrusive branch of the fine arts kept pace with its more ostentatious competitors; and even in the most flourishing period of their elevation, under the pontificate of Leo X. the eye that had contemplated the divine sculptures of Michelagnolo, or had dwelt with delight on the paintings of Raffaello, or of Titian, might have turned with pleasure to the labours of Valerio

Valerio Vicentino, or of Giovanni Bolognese, which compressed into the narrowest bounds the accurate representations of beauty, strength, or grace, and gave to the most inestimable productions of nature the highest perfection of art.

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LORENZO DE' MEDICI intends to retire from public life—Is taken sick and removes to Careggi—His conduct in his last sickness—Interview with Pico and Politiano—Savonarola visits him—Death of Lorenzo—His character—Review of his conduct as a statesman—Attachment of the Florentines to him—Circumstances attending his death—Testimonies of respect to his memory—Death of Innocent VIII. and accession of Alexander VI.—Irruption of the French into Italy—Expulsion of the Medici from Florence—Death of Ermolao Barbaro—Of Pico of Mirandula—Of Agnolo Politiano—Absurd accounts respecting the death of Politiano—His monody on Lorenzo—Politiano celebrated by Cardinal Bembo—Authentick account of his death—Disturbances excited by Savonarola—Adherents of the Medici decapitated—Disgrace and execution of Savonarola—Death of Piero de' Medici—His character—Sonnet of Piero de' Medici—Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici—Restoration of the family to Florence—Elevation of Leo. X.—Leo promotes his relations—Restores his dominions to peace—Rise of the reformation—Age of Leo X.—The Laurentian Library restored

restored—Giuliano de' Medici duke of Nemours Ippolito de' Medici—Lorenzo de' Medici duke of Urbino—Alessandro de' Medici—Descendants of Lorenzo de' Medici the brother of Cosmo—Giovanni de' Medici—Lorenzo de' Medici—Alessandro assumes the sovereignty of Florence—Is assassinated by Lorenzino—Motives and consequences of the attempt—Cosmo de' Medici first grand duke—Death of Filippo Strozzi, and final extinction of the republick—Conclusion.

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THAT love of leisure which is inseparable from a mind conscious of its own resources, and the consideration of his declining state of health, were probably the motives that induced Lorenzo de' Medici to aim at introducing his two elder sons into publick life at so early and almost premature an age. The infirmities under which he laboured not only disqualified him at times from attending with his accustomed vigilance to the affairs of the republick, but rendered it also necessary for him often to absent himself

Lorenzo intends to retire from publick life.

CHAP. X. himself from Florence, and to pass some portion of his time at the warm baths in various parts of Italy, of which those of Siena and Porrettana afforded him the most effectual relief. At those seasons which were not imbittered by sickness, he appears to have flattered himself with the expectation of enjoying the reward of his publick labours, and partaking of the general happiness which he had so essentially contributed to promote, in a peaceful and dignified retirement, enlivened by social amusements, by philosophick studies, and literary pursuits. These expectations were built upon the most substantial foundation, the consciousness that he had discharged his more immediate duties and engagements; but his feelings on this occasion are best expressed in his own words[a]: "What," says he, "can be more desirable to "a well-regulated mind, than the enjoyment "of leisure with dignity? This is what all good "men wish to obtain, but which great men "alone accomplish. In the midst of publick "affairs we may indeed be allowed to look "forward to a day of rest; but no rest should "totally seclude us from an attention to the "concerns

[a] *Ap. Fabr. in vitâ Laur. v.* I. *p.* 196.

" concerns of our country. I cannot deny that " the path which it has been my lot to tread " has been arduous and rugged, full of dangers, " and beset with treachery; but I console my- " self in having contributed to the welfare of " my country, the prosperity of which may " now rival that of any other state, however " flourishing. Nor have I been inattentive to " the interests and advancement of my own " family, having always proposed to my imita- " tion the example of my grandfather Cosmo, " who watched over his publick and private " concerns with equal vigilance. Having now " obtained the object of my cares, I trust I " may be allowed to enjoy the sweets of leisure, " to share the reputation of my fellow-citizens, " and to exult in the glory of my native place." His intentions were more explicitly made known to his faithful companion Politiano, who relates, that sitting with him in his chamber a few days before his death, and conversing on subjects of letters and philosophy, he then told him that he meant to withdraw himself as much as possible from the tumult of the city, and to devote the remainder of his days to the society of his learned friends; at the same time expressing his confidence in the abilities of his son Pie.o, on whom it was his intention that

CHAP. X. that the conduct of the affairs of the republick should principally devolve[b].

Lorenzo is taken sick, and removes to Careggi.

This prospect of relaxation and happiness he was not however destined to realize. Early in the year 1492, the complaint under which he laboured attacked him with additional violence; and whilst the attention of his physicians was employed in administering relief, he contracted a slow fever, which escaped their observation, or eluded their skill, until it was too late effectually to oppose its progress. The last illness of Lorenzo de' Medici, like that of most other great men, is represented as being extraordinary in its nature. Politiano describes his disorder as a fever, of all others the most insidious, proceeding by insensible degrees, not like other fevers, by the veins or arteries, but attacking the limbs, the intestines, the nerves, and destroying the very principle of life. On the first approach of this dangerous

[b] *Polit. Ep. lib.* iv. *Ep.* 2. But Guicciardini informs us that Lorenzo was well aware of the real character of his son, "e si era spesso lamentato, con li amici più "intimi, che l'imprudenza ed arroganza del figliuolo, "partorirebbe la rovina della sua casa."

Guic. Hist. lib. i.

ous complaint he had removed from Florence to his house at Careggi, where his moments were enlivened by the society of his friends, and the respectful attentions of his fellow-citizens. For medical advice, his chief reliance was upon the celebrated Pier Leoni of Spoleto, whom he had frequently consulted on the state of his health; but as the disorder increased, further assistance was sought for, and Lazaro da Ticino, another physician, arrived at Careggi. It seems to have been the opinion of Politiano, that the advice of Lazaro was too late resorted to; but if we may judge from the nature of the medicines employed by him, he rather accelerated than averted the fatal moment. The mixture of amalgamated pearls and jewels, with the most expensive potions, might indeed serve to astonish the attendants, and to screen the ignorance of the physician, but were not likely to be attended with any beneficial effect on the patient. Whether it was in consequence of this treatment, or from the nature of the disorder itself, a sudden and unexpected alteration soon took place; and whilst his friends relied with confidence on the exertions made in his behalf, he sunk at once into such a state of debility as totally precluded all hopes of his recovery, and left him only the care of preparing to meet his doom in a manner consistent with the

CHAP. X. the eminence of his character, and the general tenour of his life.

His conduct in his last sickness.

Notwithstanding the diversity of occupations which had successively engaged his attention, and the levity, not to say licentiousness, of some of his writings, the mind of Lorenzo had always been deeply susceptible of religious impressions. This appears not only from his attention to the establishment and reform of monastick houses[d], but from his *laudi*, or hymns, many of which breathe a spirit of devotion nearly bordering on enthusiasm. During his last sickness, this feature of his character became more prominent; nor did he judge it expedient, or perhaps think it excusable, to separate the essential from the ceremonial part of religion. Having therefore performed the offices of the church with peculiar fervour, and adjusted with sincerity and decorum his spiritual concerns, he requested a private interview with his son Piero, with whom he held a long and interesting conversation on the state of the republick, the situation of his family, and the conduct which it would be expedient for Piero to pursue. Of the precepts

[d] Of this several instances are given by his historian Valori, *p.* 58, *&c.*

precepts which he thought it necessary to inculcate on his successour, we derive some information from Politiano, which was probably obtained from the relation of his pupil[e]. "I "doubt not," said Lorenzo, "that you will "hereafter possess the same weight and autho- "rity in the state which I have hitherto enjoyed; "but as the republick, although it form but one "body, has many heads, you must not expect "that it will be possible for you on all occasions "so to conduct yourself as to obtain the appro- "bation

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[e] The circumstances preceding and attending the death of Lorenzo are minutely related by Politiano in a letter to Jacopo Antiquario, *lib.* iv. *Ep.* 2. upon the authority of which I have principally relied, as will be seen, without troubling the reader with continual references, by adverting to the letter in the Appendix, *No.* LXXVII. Fabroni has incorporated this letter in the body of his work, as both the narrative and the evidence of the facts it relates; but as Politiano has mingled with much authentick information many instances of that superstition which infested the age, and has, perhaps, shown too unlimited a partiality to the family of his patrons, I have thought it incumbent on me to separate, according to the best of my judgment, the documents of history from the dreams of the nursery, and the representations of truth from the encomiums of the friend, leaving my reader to consult the original, and to adopt as much more of the account as he may think fit.

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"bation of every individual. Remember, "therefore, in every situation to pursue that "course of conduct which strict integrity pre- "scribes, and to consult the interests of the "whole community, rather than the gratifica- "tion of a part." These admonitions, if attended to, might have preserved Piero from the ruin which the neglect of them soon brought down, and may yet serve as a lesson to those whose authority rests, as all authority must finally rest, on publick opinion. The dutiful and patient attendance of Piero on his father during his sickness was, however, a pledge to Lorenzo that his last instructions would not be forgotten; and, by confirming the favourable sentiments which he appears to have entertained of the talents and the disposition of his son, served at least to alleviate the anxiety which he must have felt on resigning, thus prematurely, the direction of such a vast and rapid machine into young and inexperienced hands.

Interview between Lorenzo, Pico, and Politiano.

At this interesting period, when the mind of Lorenzo, relieved from the weight of its important concerns, became more sensibly alive to the emotions of friendship, Politiano entered his chamber. Lorenzo no sooner heard his voice than he called on him to approach, and, raising his languid arms, clasped the hands of Politiano

Politiano in his own, at the same time steadfastly regarding him with a placid and even a cheerful countenance. Deeply affected at this silent but unequivocal proof of esteem, Politiano could not suppress his feelings, but, turning his head aside, attempted as much as possible to conceal his sobs and his tears. Perceiving his agitation, Lorenzo still continued to grasp his hand, as if intending to speak to him when his passion had subsided; but finding him unable to resist its impulse, he slowly, and as it were unintentionally relaxed his hold, and Politiano, hastening into an inner apartment, flung himself on a bed, and gave way to his grief. Having at length composed himself, he returned into the chamber, when Lorenzo again called to him, and inquired with great kindness why Pico of Mirandula had not once paid him a visit during his sickness. Politiano apologized for his friend, by assuring Lorenzo that he had only been deterred by the apprehension that his presence might be troublesome. "On the contrary," replied Lorenzo, "if his journey from the city be not trouble-"some to him, I shall rejoice to see him before "I take my final leave of you." Pico accordingly came, and seated himself at the side of Lorenzo, whilst Politiano, reclining on the bed, near the knees of his revered benefactor, as if to prevent any extraordinary exertion of his declining

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declining voice, prepared for the last time to share in the pleasures of his conversation. After excusing himself to Pico for the task he had imposed upon him, Lorenzo expressed his esteem for him in the most affectionate terms, professing that he should meet his death with more cheerfulness after this last interview. He then changed the subject to more familiar and lively topicks; and it was on this occasion that he expressed, not without some degree of jocularity, his wishes that he could have obtained a reprieve, until he could have completed the library destined to the use of his auditors.

Savonarola visits Lorenzo.

This interview was scarcely terminated, when a visiter of a very different character arrived. This was the haughty and enthusiastick Savonarola, who probably thought, that in the last moments of agitation and of suffering, he might be enabled to collect materials for his factious purposes. With apparent charity and kindness, the priest exhorted Lorenzo to remain firm in the catholick faith; to which Lorenzo professed his strict adherence. He then required an avowal of his intention, in case of his recovery, to live a virtuous and well-regulated life, to this he also signified his sincere assent. Lastly, he reminded him, that, if needful, he ought to bear his death with fortitude. "With cheerful-

"ness,"

"ness," replied Lorenzo, "if such be the "will of God." On his quitting the room, Lorenzo called him back, and, as an unequivocal mark that he harboured in his bosom no resentment against him for the injuries which he had received, requested the priest would bestow upon him his benediction; with which he instantly complied, Lorenzo making the usual responses with a firm and collected voice[f].

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[f] In the life of Savonarola, written in Latin, at considerable length, by Giovanfrancesco Pico, prince of Mirandula, nephew of the celebrated Pico whom we have had occasion so frequently to mention, an account is given of this interview, which differs in its most essential particulars from that which is above related. If we may credit this narrative, Lorenzo, when at the point of death, sent to request the attendance of Savonarola, to whom he was desirous of making his confession. Savonarola accordingly came, but, before he would consent to receive him as a penitent, required that he should declare his adherence to the true faith; to which Lorenzo assented. He then insisted on a promise from Lorenzo, that if he had unjustly obtained the property of others, he would return it, Lorenzo, after a short hesitation, replied, "Doubtless, father, I shall do this, or, if it be "not in my power, I shall enjoin it as a duty upon my "heirs." Thirdly, Savonarola required that he should restore the republick to liberty, and establish it in its former state of independence: to which Lorenzo not choosing to make any reply, the priest left him without giving

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Death of Lorenzo.

No species of reputation is so cheaply acquired as that derived from death-bed fortitude. When it is fruitless to contend, and impossible to fly, little applause is due to that resignation which patiently awaits its doom. It is not therefore to be considered as enhancing that dignity of character which Lorenzo had so frequently displayed, that he sustained the last conflict with equanimity. "To judge from his "conduct, and that of his servants," says Politiano, "you would have thought that it was "they who momentarily expected that fate, "from which he alone appeared to be exempt." Even to the last the scintillations of his former vivacity were perceptible. Being asked, on taking a morsel of food, how he relished it, "As a dying man always does," was his reply. Having affectionately embraced his surrounding friends, and submitted to the last ceremonies of the church, he became absorbed in meditation, occasionally

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giving him his absolution. *Savonar. vita, inter vit. select. viror. ap. Bates. Lond.* 1704. A story that exhibits evident symptoms of that party-spirit which did not arise in Florence until after the death of Lorenzo, and which, being contradictory to the account left by Politiano, written before the motives for misrepresentation existed, is rendered deserving of notice only by the necessity of its refutation.

occasionally repeating portions of scripture, and accompanying his ejaculations with elevated eyes and solemn gestures of his hands, till the energies of life gradually declining, and pressing to his lips a magnificent crucifix, he calmly expired.

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His character.

In the height of his reputation, and at a premature period of life, thus died Lorenzo de' Medici; a man who may be selected from all the characters of ancient and modern history, as exhibiting the most remarkable instance of depth of penetration, versatility of talent, and comprehension of mind[s]. Whether genius be a predominating impulse, directing the mind to some particular object, or whether it be an energy of intellect that arrives at excellence in any department in which it may be employed, it is certain that there are few instances in which a successful exertion in any human pursuit has not occasioned a dereliction of many other objects, the

[s] "Soyons avares," says M. Tenhove, "du titre "sacré de grand homme, prodigué si souvent et si ridi- "culement aux plus minces personnages, mais ne le "refusons point à Laurent de Medicis. Malheur à l'ame "froide et mal organisée, qui ne sentirait pas son "extreme mérite! On peut en toute sureté s'estimer de "son admiration pour lui." *Mem. Gen. liv.* xi. *p.* 146.

CHAP. X. the attainment of which might have conferred immortality. If the powers of the mind are to bear down all obstacles that oppose their progress, it seems necessary that they should sweep along in some certain course, and in one collected mass. What then shall we think of that rich fountain which, whilst it was poured out by so many different channels, flowed through each with a full and equal stream? To be absorbed in one pursuit, however important, is not the characteristick of the higher class of genius, which, piercing through the various combinations and relations of surrounding circumstances, sees all things in their just dimensions, and attributes to each its due. Of the various occupations in which Lorenzo engaged, there is not one in which he was not eminently successful; but he was most particularly distinguished in those which justly hold the first rank in human estimation. The facility with which he turned from subjects of the highest importance to those of amusement and levity, suggested to his countrymen the idea that he had two distinct souls combined in one body. Even his moral character seems to have partaken, in some degree, of the same diversity; and his devotional poems are as ardent as his lighter pieces are licentious. On all sides he touched the extremes of human character; and the powers of his mind were only

only bounded by that impenetrable circle which prescribes the limits of human nature. CHAP. X.

Review of his conduct as a statesman.

As a statesman, Lorenzo de' Medici appears to peculiar advantage. Uniformly employed in securing the peace and promoting the happiness of his country by just regulations at home and wise precautions abroad, and teaching to the surrounding governments those important lessons of political science, on which the civilization and tranquillity of nations have since been found to depend. Though possessed of undoubted talents for military exploits, and of sagacity to avail himself of the imbecility of neighbouring powers, he was superiour to that avarice of dominion which, without improving what is already acquired, blindly aims at more extensive possessions. The wars in which he engaged were for security, not for territory; and the riches produced by the fertility of the soil, and the industry and ingenuity of the inhabitants of the Florentine republick, instead of being dissipated in imposing projects and ruinous expeditions, circulated in their natural channels, giving happiness to the individual, and respectability to the state. If he was not insensible to the charms of ambition, it was the ambition to deserve rather than to enjoy; and he was always cautious not to exact from the publick favour more than

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than it might be ready voluntarily to bestow. The approximating suppression of the liberties of Florence, under the influence of his descendants, may induce suspicions unfavourable to his patriotism; but it will be difficult, not to say impossible, to discover, either in his conduct or his precepts, any thing that ought to stigmatize him as an enemy to the freedom of his country. The authority which he exercised was the same as that which his ancestors had enjoyed, without injury to the republick, for nearly a century, and had descended to him as inseparable from the wealth, the respectability, and the powerful foreign connexions of his family. The superiority of his talents enabled him to avail himself of these advantages with irresistible effect; but history suggests not an instance in which they were devoted to any other purpose than that of promoting the honour and independence of the Tuscan state. It was not by the continuance, but by the dereliction of the system which he had established, and to which he adhered to the close of his life, that the Florentine republick sunk under the degrading yoke of despotick power; and to his premature death we may unquestionably attribute, not only the destruction of the commonwealth, but all the calamities that Italy soon afterwards sustained.

The

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Attachment of the Florentines to Lorenzo.

The sympathies of mind, like the laws of chymical affinity, are uniform. Great talents attract admiration, the offering of the understanding; but the qualities of the heart can alone excite affection, the offering of the heart. If we may judge of Lorenzo de' Medici by the ardour with which his friends and contemporaries have expressed their attachment, we shall form conclusions highly favourable to his sensibility and his social virtues. The exaction of those attentions usually paid to rank and to power, he left to such as had no other claims to respect; he rather chose to be considered as the friend and the equal, than as the dictator of his fellow-citizens. His urbanity extended to the lowest ranks of society; and while he enlivened the city of Florence by magnificent spectacles and amusing representations, he partook of them himself with a relish that set the example of festivity. It was the general opinion in Florence, that whoever was favoured by Lorenzo could not fail of success. Valori relates, that in the representation of an engagement on horseback, one of the combatants, who was supposed to contend under the patronage of Lorenzo, being overpowered and wounded, avowed his resolution to die rather than submit to his adversary, and it was not without difficulty that he was rescued from the danger, to receive from the bounty

CHAP. X. bounty of Lorenzo the reward of his well-meant though mistaken fidelity.

Circumstances attending his death.

The death of Lorenzo, which happened on the eighth day of April 1492, was no sooner known at Florence than a general alarm and consternation spread throughout the city, and the inhabitants gave way to the most unbounded expressions of grief. Even those who were not friendly to the Medici lamented in this misfortune the prospect of the evils to come. The agitation of the publick mind was increased by a singular coincidence of calamitous events, which the superstition of the people considered as portentous of approaching commotions. The physician, Pier Leoni, whose prescriptions had failed of success, being apprized of the result, left Careggi in a state of distraction, and precipitated himself into a well in the suburbs of the city[h]. Two days preceding the death of Lorenzo,

[h] Whether Leoni died a voluntary death has been doubted. The enemies of the Medici, who upon the death of Lorenzo began to meditate the ruin of his family, have accused Piero his son with the perpetration of the deed; and this opinion is openly avowed by Giacopo Sanazaro in an Italian poem in *terza Rima*, in which he has imitated Dante with great success. *v. App. No.*

renzo, the great dome of the *Reparata* was struck with lightning, and on the side which approached towards the chapel of the Medici, a part of the building fell. It was also observed that one of the golden *palle* or balls, in the emblazonment of the Medicean arms, was at the same time struck out. For three nights, gleams of light were said to have been perceived proceeding from the hill of Fiesole, and hovering above CHAP. X.

No. LXXVIII. But I must observe, that this poem bears internal evidence of its having been written after the Medici were driven from Florence, when their enemies were labouring by every possible means to render them odious. On the other hand, besides the testimony of Politiano that Leoni accelerated his own death, we have that of Petrus Crinitus (Piero Ricci), a contemporary author, who, in his treatise *De honesta Disciplina*, has a chapter *De hominibus qui se ipsos in puteum jaciant*, in which he thus adverts to the death of Leoni: "Sed enim quod "nuper accidit in Petro Leonio, mirificum certe visum "est; quando is, et in philosophia vir excellens, ac pru-"dentia propè egregia, in puteum se Florentino sub-"urbano immersit." *Lib.* iii. *cap.* 9. This circumstance is also related by Valerianus. *De infel. literatorum, lib.* i. It appears, however, from an account of the death of Lorenzo, published by Fabroni, from a MS. diary of an anonymous Florentine author yet preserved in the Magliabechi library, *Cod.* xvii. *Class.* 25, that Leoni entertained apprehensions for his safety from the attendants of Lorenzo, who, without just cause, suspected that he had occasioned his death by poison. I shall give the extract from this diary in the Appendix, *No.* LXXIX.

CHAP. X. above the church of S. Lorenzo, where the remains of the family were deposited. Besides these incidents, founded perhaps on some casual occurrence, and only rendered extraordinary by the workings of a heated imagination, many others of a similar kind are related by contemporary authors, which, whilst they exemplify that credulity which characterizes the human race in every age, may at least serve to shew that the event to which they were supposed to allude was conceived to be of such magnitude as to occasion a deviation from the ordinary course of nature[i]. From Careggi the body of Lorenzo was conveyed to the church of his patron saint, amidst the tears and lamentations of all ranks of people, who bewailed the loss of their faithful protector, the glory of their city, the companion of their amusements, their common

[i] *Ficinus in fine Plotini. Flor.* 1492. *Ammir. lib.* xxvi. *v.* iii. *fl.* 186. Even Machiavelli, an author seldom accused of superstition, seems on this occasion to concede his credulity to the general opinion. "Ne morì mai "alcuno, non solamente in Firenze, ma in Italia, con "tanta fama di prudenza, nè che tanto alla sua patria "dolesse. E come dalla sua morte ne dovesse nascere "grandissime rovine, ne mostrò il cielo molti eviden- "tissimi segni," &c. *Hist. lib.* viii. This author concludes his celebrated history, as Guicciardini begins, with the highest eulogium on the character of Lorenzo.

common father and friend. His obsequies were without ostentation, he having a short time before his death given express directions to that effect. Not a tomb or an inscription marks the place that received his ashes; but the stranger, who, smitten with the love of letters and of arts, wanders amidst the splendid monuments erected to the chiefs of this illustrious family, the work of Michelagnolo and of his powerful competitors, whilst he looks in vain for that inscribed with the name of Lorenzo, will be reminded of his glory by them all. CHAP. X.

Throughout the rest of Italy the death of Lorenzo was regarded as a publick calamity of the most alarming kind. Of the arch which supported the political fabrick of that country he had long been considered as the centre, and his loss seemed to threaten the whole with immediate destruction. When Ferdinand, king of Naples, was informed of this event, he exclaimed, "This man has lived long enough for his own "glory, but too short a time for Italy[k]." Such Testimonies of respect to his memory.

[k] "Satis sibi vir immortalitate dignissimus vixit, sed "parum Italiæ. Utinam ne quis eo sublato, moliatur, "quæ vivo, tentare ausus non fuisset." In which Ferdinand was supposed to allude to Lod. Sforza.

[l] *Fabr. vita Laur. v.* i. *p.* 212.

CHAP. X. Such of the Italian potentates as were more nearly connected with the Medici sent ambassadours to Florence on this occasion. Letters of condolence were transmitted to Piero from almost all the sovereigns of Europe. Many distinguished individuals also paid this last tribute to the memory of their friend and benefactor[1]. Among these communications, dictated by flattery, by friendship, and by political motives, there is one of a more interesting nature. This is a letter from the young cardinal Giovanni de' Medici to his elder brother, written four days after the death of their father, which evinces that the cardinal was not without apprehensions from the temper and disposition of Piero, and does equal honour to his prudence and to his filial piety.

The Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, at Rome, to Piero de' Medici, at Florence.

"My dearest brother, now the only sup-
"port of our family; what I have to commu-
"nicate to thee, except my tears, I know
"not;

[1] These letters, forming a collection in two volumes, are yet preserved in *MS.* in the *Palazzo Vecchio* at Florence, *Filz.* XXV. *No.* XV.

" not; for when I reflect on the loss we have CHAP.
" sustained in the death of our father, I am X.
" more inclined to weep than to relate my
" sorrow. What a father have we lost! How
" indulgent to his children! Wonder not then
" that I grieve, that I lament, that I find no
" rest. Yet, my brother, I have some consola-
" tion in reflecting that I have thee, whom I
" shall always regard in the place of a father.
" Do thou command—I shall cheerfully obey.
" Thy injunctions will give me more pleasure
" than I can express—order me—put me to the
" test—there is nothing that shall prevent my
" compliance. Allow me however, my Piero,
" to express my hopes, that in thy conduct to
" all, and particularly to those around thee,
" I may find thee as I could wish—beneficent,
" liberal, affable, and humane; by which qua-
" lities there is nothing but may be obtained,
" nothing but may be preserved. Think not
" that I mention this from any doubt that I
" entertain of thee, but because I esteem it to
" be my duty. Many things strengthen and
" console me; the concourse of people that
" surround our house with lamentations, the
" sad and sorrowful appearance of the whole
" city, the publick mourning, and other similar
" circumstances, these in a great degree alleviate
" my grief; but that which relieves me more
" than

CHAP. X. "than all the rest, is, that I have thee, my "brother, in whom I place a confidence that no "words can describe, &c. *Ex urbe, die* 12*th* "*Ap.* 1492[m]."

The common mediator of Italy being now no more, the same interested and unenlightened motives which had so often rendered that country the seat of treachery and of bloodshed again began to operate, and the ambitious views of the different sovereigns became the more dangerous as they were the more concealed. Such was the confidence which they had placed in Lorenzo, that not a measure of importance was determined on by any of them without its being previously communicated to him, when, if he thought it likely to prove hostile to the general tranquillity, he was enabled either to prevent its execution, or at least to obviate its ill effects; but upon his death a general suspicion of each other took place, and laid the foundation of the unhappy consequences that soon afterwards ensued. The impending evils of Italy were accelerated by the death of Innocent VIII. who survived Lorenzo only a few months, and still more by the elevation to the pontificate of Roderigo

Death of Innocent VIII. and accession of Alexander VI.

[m] For the original, *v. Appx. No.* LXXX.

Roderigo Borgia, the scourge of Christendom, and the opprobrium of the human race[n]. CHAP. X.

Irruption of the French into Italy.

Piero de' Medici, on whom the eyes and expectations of the publick were turned, gave early indications that he was unable to sustain the weight that had devolved upon him. Elated with the authority derived from his father, but forgetting the admonitions by which it was accompanied, he relaxed the reins that controlled all

[n] A striking instance of the influence which Lorenzo had obtained over the mind of Innocent VIII. appears from one of his unpublished letters preserved in the *Palazzo Vecchio* at Florence (*Filz.* lix. *No.* xiv.), dated the 16th day of June 1488, from which we collect, that the pope had transmitted to him the list of an intended promotion of cardinals, which Lorenzo returns, informing him that he approves of the nomination of such of them whose names he has marked with a pen, and exhorting him to carry his intentions with respect to them into execution, concluding his letter with reminding the pope *chè se può consolare ancor lui, se ne ricordi.* In fact, the assumption of Giovanni de' Medici to the purple took place early in the following year; and as Innocent VIII. only made one promotion of cardinals during his pontificate, it appears that Lorenzo had sufficient address to procure the name of his son, who was then only thirteen years of age, to be included in the list.

CHAP. X. all Italy, to grasp at the supreme dominion of his native place. For this purpose he secretly formed a more intimate connexion with the king of Naples and the pope, which being discovered by the penetrating eye of Lodovico Sforza, raised in him a spirit of jealousy, which the professions and assurances of Piero could never allay. An interval of dissatisfaction, negotiation, and distrust took place, till at length the solicitations of Lodovico and the ambition of Charles VIII. brought into Italy a more formidable and warlike race, whose arrival spread a general terrour and alarm, and convinced, too late, the states and sovereigns of that country of the folly of their mutual dissensions. Even Lodovico himself, who, in the expectation of weakening his rivals, and of vesting in himself the government of Milan, had incessantly laboured to accomplish this object, no sooner saw its approach than he shrunk from it in terrour; and whilst he was obliged, for the sake of consistency, to persevere in exhorting Charles to proceed in his enterprise, against the kingdom of Naples, he endeavoured by secret emissaries to excite against him the most formidable opposition of the Italian powers. Lodovico having for this purpose despatched an envoy to Florence, Piero conceived that he had

had obtained a favourable opportunity of convincing the king of France of the insincerity of his pretended ally, and thereby of deterring him from the further prosecution of his undertaking; but, however laudable his purpose might be, the means which he adopted for its accomplishment reflect but little credit on his talents. In the palace of the Medici was an apartment which communicated with the gardens by a secret door, constructed by Lorenzo de' Medici for the purpose of convenience and retirement. In this room Piero, pretending to be sick, contrived an interview with the agent of Lodovico, whilst the envoy of Charles VIII., secreted behind the door, was privy to their conversation[o]. Whether Piero had not the address to engage the Milanese sufficiently to develop the views of his master, or whether the French envoy found the Italian politicians equally undeserving of confidence, rests only on conjecture; but the communication of this incident to Charles tended not in the slightest degree to avert the impending calamity. On the contrary, the conduct of Piero being made known to Lodovico, rendered any further communication between them impossible, and by preventing

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[o] *Oricell. de bello Ital. p.* 24.

CHAP. X. preventing that union of the Italian states, which alone could have opposed with effect the further progress of the French arms, facilitated an enterprise that could owe its success only to the misconduct of its opponents[p].

Expulsion of the Medici from Florence.

This unfortunate event led the way to another incident more immediately destructive to the credit and authority of Piero de' Medici. Charles, at the head of his troops, had, without resistance, reached the confines of the Florentine state, and had attacked the town of Sarzana, which Lorenzo, after having recovered it from the Genoese, had strongly fortified. The approach of such a formidable body of men, the reputation they had acquired, and the atrocities they had committed in their progress, could not fail of exciting great consternation in Florence, where the citizens began freely to express their dissatisfaction with Piero de' Medici, who they asserted had, by his rash and intemperate measures, provoked the resentment of a powerful sovereign, and endangered the very existence of the republick. This crisis suggested to Piero the situation in which his father stood, when, in order to terminate a war which threatened him with

[p] *Guicciard. Hist. d' Italia, lib.* i.

with destruction he had hastened to Naples, and, placing himself in the power of an avowed enemy, had returned to Florence with the credentials of peace[r]. The present season appeared to him favourable for a similar attempt; but, as Guicciardini judiciously observes, it is dangerous to guide ourselves by precedent, unless the cases be exactly alike; unless the attempt be conducted with equal prudence, and, above all, unless it be attended with the same good fortune[s]. The impetuosity of Piero prevented him from observing these distinctions—hastening to the French camp, he threw himself at the feet of Charles, who received his submission with coldness and disdain[t]. Finding his entreaties ineffectual, he became lavish in his offers to promote the interests of the king, and, as a pledge of his fidelity, proposed to deliver up to him not only the important fortress of Sarzana, which had till then successfully resisted his attacks, but also the town of Pietra Santa, and the cities of Pisa and Leghorn, Charles at the same time undertaking

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[r] *v. ante, vol.* I. *p.* 233.

[s] *Guicciard. Hist. d' Italia, lib.* I.

[t] *Oricell. de bello Ital. p.* 39.

CHAP. X. undertaking to restore them when he had accomplished his conquest of the kingdom of Naples[u]. The temerity of Piero in provoking the resentment of Charles, added to his inability to ward off, and his pusillanimity in resisting the blow, completed what his ambition and his arrogance had begun, and for ever deprived him of the respect and confidence of his fellow-citizens. On his return to Florence, after this disgraceful compromise, he was refused admittance into the palace of the magistrates, and, finding that the people at large were so highly exasperated against him as to endanger his personal safety, he hastily withdrew himself from

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[u] The French were themselves astonished at the prodigality of Piero, and the facility with which he delivered into their hands places of so much importance. "Ceux qui traitoyent avec Pierre," says P. de Commines, "m'ont compté, et à plusiers autres l' ont dit, "en se raillant et moquant de lui, qu'ils etoient ebahis "comme si tot accorda si grand chose, et a quoi ils ne "s'attendoient point." *Mem. de Commines, lib.* vii. *p.* 198. The day after Piero had entered into his unfortunate treaty, Lodovico Sforza arrived at the French camp, when Piero, who was not at open enmity with him, excused himself for not having met him on the road, because Lodovico had missed his way. "It is true "enough," said Lodovico, "that one of us has lost his "way, but perhaps it may prove to be yourself."

Guic. lib. i.

from his native place, and retreated to Venice[v]. The distress and devastation which the inhabitants CHAP. X.

[v] Condivi relates an extraordinary story respecting Piero de' Medici, communicated to him by Michelagnolo, who had, it seems, formed an intimacy with one Cardiere, an improvvisatore, that frequented the house of Lorenzo, and amused his evenings with singing to the lute. Soon after the death of Lorenzo, Cardiere informed Michelagnolo, that Lorenzo had appeared to him, habited only in a black and ragged mantle thrown over his naked limbs, and had ordered him to acquaint Piero de' Medici, that he would in a short time be banished from Florence. Cardiere, who seems judiciously to have feared the resentment of the living more than that of the dead, declined the office; but soon afterwards Lorenzo entering his chamber at midnight, awoke him, and reproaching him with his inattention, gave him a violent blow on the cheek. Having communicated this second visit to his friend, who advised him no longer to delay his errand, he set out for Careggi, where Piero then resided; but meeting him with his attendants about midway between that place and Florence, he there delivered his message, to the great amusement of Piero and his followers; one of whom, Bernardo Divizio, afterwards Cardinal da Bibbiena, sarcastically asked him, *Whether, if Lorenzo had been desirous of giving information to his son, it was likely he would have preferred such a messenger to a personal communication?* The biographer adds, with great solemnity, "La vision del Cardiere, o delusion diabolica, o predi-" zion divina, o forte immaginazione, ch' ella si fosse, " si verificò."—But the awful spectre is now before me—I see the terrified musician start from his slumbers; his left

CHAP. X. inhabitants of Italy experienced for a series of years after this event, have afforded a subject upon which their historians have dwelt with melancholy accuracy. Amidst these disasters, there is perhaps no circumstance that so forcibly excites the regret of the friends of letters, as the plundering of the palace of the Medici, and the dispersion of that invaluable library, whose origin and progress have before been traced. The French troops that had entered the city of Florence without opposition, led the way to this sacrilegious deed, in the perpetration of which they were joined by the Florentines themselves, who openly carried off, or secretly purloined, whatever they could discover that was interesting, rare, or valuable. Besides the numerous manuscripts in almost every language, the depredators seized, with contentious avidity, the many inestimable specimens of the arts with which the house of the Medici abounded, and which had long rendered it

left hand grasps his beloved lyre, whilst, with his right thrown over his head, he attempts to shroud himself from the looks of Lorenzo, who, with a countenance more in sorrow than in anger, points out to him his destined mission. To realize this scene so as to give it interest and effect, required the glowing imagination and the animated pencil of a FUSELI.

it the admiration of strangers, and the chief ornament of the city. Exquisite pieces of ancient sculpture, vases, cameos, and gems of various kinds, more estimable for their workmanship than for their native value, shared in the general ruin; and all that the assiduity and the riches of Lorenzo and his ancestors had been able to accumulate in half a century, was dissipated or demolished in a day[w].

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The

[w] The destruction of this invaluable collection is pathetically related by Bernardo Rucellai. "Hic me "studium charitasque litterarum antiquitatis admonet, "ut non possim non deplorare inter subitas fundatissimæ "familiæ ruinas, Mediceam bibliothecam, insignesque "thesauros, quorum pars a Gallis, pars a paucis e "nostris, rem turpissimam honesta specie prætenden-"tibus, furacissime subrepta sunt. Non cum jam "pridem gens Medicea floreret omnibus copiis, terra, "marique cuncta exquirere, dum sibi Græcarum, Lati-"narumque litterarum monumenta, toreumata, gemmas, "margaritas, aliaque hujuscemodi opera, natura simul "et antiquo artificio conspicua compararent," &c. "Testimonio sunt litteræ gemmis ipsis incisæ Laurentii, "nomen præferentes, quas ille sibi familiæque suæ pro-"spiciens scalpendas curavit, futurum ad posteros regii "splendoris monumentum," &c. "Hæc omnia magno "conquisita studio, summisque parta opibus, et ad "multum ævi in deliciis habita, quibus nihil nobilius, "nihil Florentiæ quod magis visendum putaretur, uno "puncto temporis in prædam cessere; tanta Gallorum "avaritia,

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The same reverse of fortune that overwhelmed the political labours of Lorenzo, that rendered his descendants fugitives, and dispersed his effects, seemed to extend to his friends and associates, almost all of whom unhappily perished within a short interval after his death, although in the common course of nature they might have expected a longer life. The first of these eminent men was Ermolao Barbaro, of whose friendly intercourse with Lorenzo many testimonies remain, and who died of the plague in the year 1493, when only thirty-nine years of age[x]. This event was succeeded by the death of

Death of Ermolao Barbaro.

" avaritia, perfidiaque nostrorum fuit." *De bello Ital. fl.* 52, *&c.* This event is also commemorated by P. de Commines, who, with true Gothick simplicity, relates the number, weight, and saleable value of the articles of which the palace of the Medici was plundered. The antique vases he denominates " beaux pots d'agate—— " et tant de beaux camayeux, bien taillés que merveilles " (qu' autrefois j'avois veus) et bien trois mille medales " d'or et d'argent, bien la pesanteur de quarante livres ; " et croi qu'il n'y avoit point autant de belles medales " en Italie. Ce qu'il perdit ce jour en la cité valoit cent " mille ecus et plus." *Mem. de Com. liv.* vii. *c.* 9.

[x] The life and learned labours of Ermolao have afforded a subject of much discussion to Vossius, Bayle, and others, and have been considered with particular accuracy

of Pico of Mirandula, who in his thirty-second year fell a victim to his avidity for science, and has

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Pico of Mirandula.

accuracy by Apostolo Zeno, *Dissert. Voss. v.* ii. *p.* 348. *& seq.* · His first work was a treatise *De Cælibatu*, which he wrote at eighteen years of age. His *Castigationes Plinianæ* entitle him to rank with the most successful restorers of learning. Politiano denominates him *Hermolaus Barbarus barbariæ hostis acerrimus. Miscel. cap.* xc. Being on an embassy to Rome in the year 1491, Innocent VIII. conferred on him the high dignity of Patriarch of Aquileja, which he accepted without regarding the decree of the Venetian government, which directed that none of their ministers at the court of Rome should receive any ecclesiastical preferment without the consent of the council. His father, who held the second office in the state, is said to have died of chagrin, because he could not prevail upon his countrymen to approve the preferment of his son. But Ermolao availed himself of his dismission from publick business, to return with greater earnestness to his studies, and in two years wrote more than he had done for twenty years preceding. In his last sickness at Rome, Pico of Mirandula sent him a remedy for the cure of the plague, composed of the oil of scorpions, the tongues of asps, &c. " Ut nihil fieri posset contra pestilentem " morbum commodius aut presentius." *Crin. de honest. disciſ. lib.* i. *c.* 7. But this grand panacea arrived too late. " Egli non è da tacersi," says Apostolo Zeno, " un " gran fregio di questo valente uomo, ed è, che visse, e " morì *vergine*." Which information is confirmed by the authority of Piero Dolfini, who, in a letter to Ugolino Verini asserts, QUOD ABSQUE ULLA CARNIS CONTAGIONE VIXERIT. *Diss. Voss.* ii. *p.* 385. A very particular account

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Sic cygnus moriens solet;
Sic luscinia conqueri.
Heu miser, miser;
O dolor, dolor.
—Laurus impetu fulminis
Illa illa jacet subito;
Laurus omnium celebris
Musarum choris,
Nympharum choris,
Sub cujus patula coma,
Et Phœbi lyra blandius
Et vox dulcius insonat.
Nunc muta omnia,
Nunc sûrda omnia.
—Quis dabit capiti meo
Aquam? quis oculis meis
Fontem lachrymarum dabit?
Ut nocte fleam,
Ut luce fleam.
Sic turtur viduus solet;
Sic cygnus moriens solet;
Sic luscinia conqueri.
Heu miser, miser;
O dolor, dolor.

Who from perennial streams shall bring,
Of gushing floods a ceaseless spring?
That through the day in hopeless woe,
That through the night my tears may flow.
As the reft turtle mourns his mate,
As sings the swan his coming fate,

As

As the sad nightingale complains,
I pour my anguish and my strains,
Ah wretched, wretched past relief,
O grief, beyond all other grief.

—Through heaven the gleamy lightning flies,
And prone on earth my LAUREL lies:
That laurel, boast of many a tongue,
Whose praises every muse has sung,
Which every dryad of the grove,
And all the tuneful sisters love.
That laurel, that erewhile displayed
Its ample honours; in whose shade
To louder notes was strung the lyre,
And sweeter sang th' Aonian quire,
Now silent, silent all around,
And deaf the ear that drank the sound.

—Who from perennial streams shall bring,
Of gushing floods a ceaseless spring?
That through the day in hopeless woe,
That through the night my tears may flow.
As the reft turtle mourns his mate,
As sings the swan his coming fate,
As the sad nightingale complains,
I pour my anguish and my strains.
Ah wretched, wretched past relief,
O grief beyond all other grief.

Such was the object of the affections of Politiano, and such the amorous effusion, in the

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the midst of which he was intercepted by the hand of death; yet if we advert to the charges which have been brought against him, we shall find that they are chiefly if not wholly, to be attributed to a misrepresentation, or perversion, of these lines. Of those who, after Jovius, have repeated the accusation, one author informs us, that the verses which Politiano addressed to the object of his love were so tender and impassioned, that he expired just as he had finished the second couplet[z]. Another relates that in the frenzy of a fever, he had eluded the vigilance of his guard, and escaping from his bed, seized his lute, and began to play upon it under the window of a young Greek of whom he was enamoured, whence he was brought back by his friends, half dead, and expired in his bed soon

[z] *Varillas, Anecdotes de Florence. lib.* iv. *p.* 196. "La "passion criminelle qu'il avoit pour un de ses écoliers de "haute qualité, ne pouvant etre assouvie, lui donna la "fièvre chaude. Dans la violence de l' accès, il fit un "chanson pour l' objet dont il étoit charmé, se leva du "lit, prit un luth, et se mit à la chanter sur un air si "tendre, et si pitoyable, qu'il expira en achevant *le second* "*couplet*; le même jour que Charles VIII. passa les "Alpes pour aller à la conquête de Naples." This author seems equally misinformed as to the manner and the time of the death of Politiano.

soon afterwards[a]. We are next informed, that in a fit of amorous impatience, he occasioned his own death, by striking his head against the wall[b]: whilst a fourth author assures us, that he was killed by a fall from the stairs, as he was singing to his lute an elegy which he had composed on the death of Lorenzo de' Medici[c]. The contrariety of these relations, not one of which is supported

[a] "Politien, ce bel esprit, qui parloit si bien Latin, "s'appelloit Ange; mais il s'en falloit beaucoup qu'il en "eut la pureté. La passion honteuse et l' abominable "amour dont il bruloit pour un jeune garçon, qui etoit "Grec de naissance, a fletri à perpetuité sa memorie, et "causa sa mort. Car etant tombé dans une fievre chaude, "il se leva brusquement de son lit, la nuit, que sa garde "etoit endormie, prit la luth à la main, et en alla jouer "sous la fenêtre du petit Grec. On l'en retira à demi "mort, et on le remporta dans son lit, ou il expira "bientôt après," &c.

Ab. Faydit, Remarques sur Virgile et sur Homere, &c. Menck. in vitâ Pol. p. 472.

[b] "Vulgo fertur," says Vossius, *De Hist. Lat. lib.* iii. *c.* 8. "obiise Politianum fœdi amoris impatientia capite "in parietem illiso." *Ap. Menck.* 470.

[c] *Bullart Acad. des Hommes illustres, tom.* i. *p.* 278. "Politien —— tomba d'un escalier comme il chantoit "sur son luth une elegie, qu'il avoit composée sur la "mort de Laurent. de Medicis."

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supported by the slightest pretence to serious or authentick testimony, is itself a sufficient proof of their futility. Some years after the death of Politiano, the celebrated cardinal Bembo, touched with the untimely fate of a man whom he was induced, by a similarity of taste and character, to love and admire, paid a tribute of gratitude and respect to his memory in a few elegiack verses, in which, alluding to the unfinished monody of Politiano, he represents him as sinking under the stroke of fate, at the moment when, frantick with excess of grief, he was attempting, by the power of musick, to revoke the fatal decree which had deprived him of his friend.

Politiani Tumulus.

Politiano celebrated by Cardinal Bembo.

Duceret extincto cum mors LAURENTE triumphum,
Lætaque pullatis inveheretur equis,
Respicit insano ferientem pollice chordas,
Viscera singultu concutiente, virum.
Mirata est, tenuitque jugum : furit ipse, pioque
LAURENTEM cunctos flagitat ore Deos.
Miscebat precibus lachrymas, lachrymisque dolorem ;
Verba ministrabat liberiora dolor.
Risit, et antiquæ non immemor illa querelæ,
Orphei Tartariæ cum patuere viæ,
Hic etiam infernas tentat rescindere leges,
Fertque suas, dixit, in mea jura manus.

Protinus

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Protinus et flentem percussit dura poetam ;
Rupit et in medio pectora docta sono.
—Heu sic tu raptus, sic te mala fata tulerunt,
Arbiter Ausoniæ, POLITIANE, lyræ.

Whilst born in sable state, LORENZO's bier
The tyrant Death, his proudest triumph, brings,
He mark'd a bard in agony severe,
Smite with delirious hand the sounding strings.
He stop'd—he gaz'd—the storm of passion rag'd,
And prayers with tears were mingled, tears with grief;
For lost LORENZO, war with fate he wag'd,
And every god was call'd to bring relief.
The tyrant smil'd—and mindful of the hour
When from the shades his consort Orpheus led,
" Rebellious too would'st thou usurp my power,
" And burst the chain that binds the captive dead ?"
He spoke—and speaking, launch'd the shaft of fate,
And clos'd the lips that glow'd with sacred fire.
His timeless doom 'twas thus POLITIAN met—
POLITIAN, master of th'Ausonian lyre.

The fiction of the poet, that Politiano had incurred the resentment of death by his affection for the object of his passion, suggests nothing more than that this death was occasioned by sorrow for the loss of his friend; but

CHAP. X. but the verses of Bembo seem to have given a further pretext to the enemies of Politiano, who appear to have mistaken the friend whom he has celebrated, for the object of an amorous passion, and to have interpreted these lines, so honourable to Politiano, in a manner not only the most unfavourable to his character, but the most opposite to their real purport, and to the occasion which gave them birth[d].

From

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[d] "Nous sçavons maintenant la veritable mort de "Politien, que le Cardinal Bembe a deguisée dans l'epi- "taphe qu'il lui a dressée. Comme il chantoit sur le "luth au dessus d'un escalier une chanson qu'il avoit "faite autrefois pour une fille qu'il aimoit, lorsqu'il vint "à certains vers fort patetiques, son luth lui tomba des "mains, et lui tomba aussi de l'escalier en bas, et se "rompit le col." *Pier. de S. Romuald, Abregé du Tresor Chronol. tom.* iii. *p.* 262. *ap. Menck. p.* 476. These imputations on the moral character of Politiano have also been frequently adverted to by other authors: thus J. C. Scaliger:

"Obscæno moreris sed, Politiane, furore."

And in yet grosser terms by Andrea Dati:

"Et ne te teneam diutius, quot
"Pædicat pueros Politianus."

v. Menagiana. v. iv. *p.* 122.

Authentick account of his death.

From much more authentick documents which yet remain respecting the death of this eminent scholar, there is reason to conclude, that it was occasioned by his grief for the loss of his great patron, and by the subsequent misfortunes of a family with which he was connected by so many endearing ties. That he had incurred the publick odium in a high degree, on account of his attachment to that family, is also certain; and the mortification and anxiety which he on this account experienced perhaps accelerated the fatal event. It may also be observed, that his property was plundered during the commotions at Florence, and many of his works destroyed or lost in the general devastation of the Laurentian Library, which incident made a deep impression on his mind[e]. In short, such was the sudden tide of misfortune that burst in upon him from all quarters, that it is probable his fortitude was unable to support the shock; and, notwithstanding his industry, his accomplishments, and his unwearied exertions in promoting the

[e] This is sufficiently apparent from the beautiful lines addressed to him by Titus Vespasiano Strozzi, published in the collection of the poems of the two Strozzi, father and son, by Aldo, 1513. *v. Appx. No.* LXXXII.

CHAP. X. the progress of learning, to such an extreme of misery was he reduced, that he is too justly enumerated by Valerianus amongst the unhappy children of science, who have afforded examples for his singular work, *De Infelicitate Literatorum*. But whatever was the immediate occasion of his death, indisputable evidence remains, that his misfortunes were not so much to be attributed to his misconduct or his immorality, as to his steady adherence to the family of the Medici, at a time when the publick resentment against them was excited to the highest pitch; and that he breathed his last in the midst of his relatives and friends, having first expressed his desire to be buried in the church of S. Marco, in the habit of the Domenican order. This request was complied with by the piety of his pupil Roberto Ubaldini, one of the monks of the convent of S. Marco, who has left a memorial in his own handwriting of the circumstances attending his death[f]. His remains were accordingly deposited in the church of S. Marco, where his memory is

[f] The indefatigable Abate Mehus, in his life of Ambrogio Traversari, first produced these documents, which the reader will find in the Appendix, *No.* LXXXIII.

is preserved in an epitaph very unworthy of his character and genius[g]. CHAP. X.

The various and discordant relations respecting the death of Politiano are happily adverted to by one of his countrymen in the following lines:

Pamphili Saxi,

De morte Angeli Politiani.

Quo cecidit fato nostri decus ANGELUS ævi,
Gentis et Etruscæ gloria, scire cupis?
Icterici non hunc labes tristissima morbi,
Febris ad Elysias vel tulit atra domos;
Non inflans humor pectus, non horrida bilis;
Mortiferæ pestis denique nulla lues:
Sed, quoniam rigidas ducebat montibus ornos,
Frangebat scopulos, decipiebat aves,
Mulcebat tigres, sistebat flumina cantu,
Plectra movens plectro dulcius Ismario.

Non

[g] POLITIANUS.
IN. HOC. TUMULO. JACET.
ANGELUS. UNUM.
QUI. CAPUT. ET. LINGUAS.
RES. NOVA. TRES. HABUIT.
OBIIT. AN. MCCCCLXXXXIV.
SEP. XXIV. ÆTATIS.
XL.

CHAP. X. magistrates voluntarily abdicated their offices; and an effort was made to establish the government on a more popular basis, by vesting the legislative power of the state in the *Consiglio Maggiore*, or Council of the Citizens, and in a select body, called the *Consiglio degli Scelti*, or Select Council[k]. The first of these was to be composed of at least one thousand citizens, who could derive their citizenship by descent, and were upwards of thirty years of age; the latter consisted of eighty members, who were elected half-yearly from the great council, and were upwards of forty years of age[l]. These regulations, instead of uniting the citizens in one common interest, gave rise to new distinctions. The *Frateschi*, or adherents of Savonarola, who were in general favourable to the liberty of the lower classes of the inhabitants, regarded the friar as the messenger of heaven, as the guide of their temporal and eternal happiness; whilst the *Compagnacci*, or adherents to a more aristocratical

[k] To this government Machiavelli alludes in his second Decennale:

"E dopo qualche disparer trovaste,
"Nuov' ordine al governo, e furon tante,
"Che il vostro stato popolar fondaste."

[l] *Nerli, Comment. lib.* iv. *p.* 66, 67.

cratical government, represented him as a factious impostor; and Alexander VI. seconded their cause by fulminating against him the anathemas of the church. Thus impelled by the most powerful motives that can actuate the human mind, the citizens of Florence were seized with a temporary insanity. In the midst of their devotions, they frequently rushed in crowds from the church, to assemble in the publick squares, crying *Viva Cristo*, singing hymns, and dancing in circles formed by a citizen and a friar, placed alternately[m]. The hymns sung on these occasions were chiefly composed by Girolamo Benivieni, who appears to have held a distinguished rank amongst these disciples of fanaticism[n]. The enemies of Savonarola were as immoderate in their opposition as his partisans were

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[m] *Nerli, Comment. lib.* iv. *p.* 75.

[n] Some of these compositions are preserved in the general collection of his poems. The following lines, which seem peculiarly adapted for such an occasion, may serve as a specimen:

"Non fu mai'l più bel solazzo,
"Più giocondo nè maggiore,
"Che per zelo, e per amore
"Di Jesu, diventar pazzo.
"Ognun gridi com' io grido,
"Sempre pazzo, pazzo, pazzo."

Op. di Beniv. p. 143.

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were in their attachment. Even the children of the city were trained in opposite factions, and saluted each other with showers of pebbles; in which contests the gravest citizens were sometimes unable to resist the inclination of taking a part°.

Adherents of the Medici decapitated.

Such was the state of Florence in the year 1497, when Piero de' Medici, who had long waited

° Era talvolta, predicando il frate, in sul bello della predica suonata tamburi, e fatti altri rumori per impedirlo; e molte volte gli fu nel venir da S. Marco a S. Liparata giù per la via del Cocomero, da' fanciulli de' suoi avversarj fatto baie fanciullesche, e da' fanciulli della sua parte era voluto defendere, dimanierachè, secondo il costume de' fanciulli Fiorentini, facevano a' sassi, e così combattendo facevano infanciullire degli uomini gravi; perchè occorse a M. Luca Corsini, benchè Dottore assai riputato, per favorire la parte del Frate mescolarsi co' fanciulli a fare a' sassi; e Giovanbattista Ridolfi, uno de' più riputati e savj cittadini che fussero a tempj suoi, posta da canto la gravità, e quel grado che a un tale, e sì onorato Cittadino si conveniva, prese un giorno l'armi, e in su certa occasione, per essere impedita al frate la predica intorno a S. Liparato, uscì della casa de' Lorini vicine a quel tempio, quasi infuriato, senza seguito alcuno, con una roncola in ispalla, gridando, *Viva Cristo*; com' anche gridavano i fanciulli del Frate; e di queste così fatte cose ne seguivano spesso.'

Nerli, Comment. lib. iv. *fo.* 74.

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waited for an opportunity of regaining his authority, entered into a negotiation with several of his adherents, who undertook, at an appointed hour, to admit him within the walls of the city, with the troops which he had obtained from the Venetian republick, and from his relations of the Orsini family. Piero did not however make his appearance till the opportunity of assisting him was past. His abettors were discovered; five of them, of the chief families of Florence, were decapitated; the rest were imprisoned or sent into banishment. The persons accused would have appealed from their judges to the *Consiglio Grande*, according to a law which had lately been obtained by the influence of the *Frateschi;* but that party, with Savonarola at their head, were clamorous for the execution of the delinquents, and, in spite of the law which they had themselves introduced, effected their purpose. Amongst the five sufferers was Lorenzo Tornabuoni, the maternal cousin of Lorenzo de' Medici, of whose accomplishments Politiano has left a very favourable account, and to whom he has inscribed his beautiful poem entitled *Ambra*[p].

The

[p] *v. ante, p.* 186.

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Disgrace and execution of Savonarola.

The authority of Savonarola was now at its highest pitch. Instead of a republick, Florence assumed the appearance of a theocracy, of which Savonarola was the prophet, the legislator, and the judge[q]. He perceived not, however, that he had arrived at the edge of the precipice, and that by one step further he might incur destruction. Amongst the methods resorted to by the opponents of Savonarola to weaken his authority, and to counteract his pretensions, they had attacked him with his own weapons, and had excited two Franciscan monks to declaim against him from the pulpit. Savonarola found it necessary to call in the aid of an assistant, for which purpose he selected Fra Domenico da Pescia, a friar of his own convent of S. Marco. The contest was kept up by each of the contending parties with equal fury, till Domenico, transported with zeal for the

[q] This fanatical party proceeded so far as even to strike a coin on the occasion, a specimen of which in silver is preserved in the collection of the late Earl of Orford, to whose kind communications, since the first edition of this work, I have been greatly indebted. On one side is the Florentine device, or *fleur de lys*, with the motto, SENATUS POPULUSQUE FLORENTINUS; on the other, a cross, with the motto, JESUS CHRISTUS REX NOSTER.

the interests of his master, proposed to confirm the truth of his doctrines by walking through the flames, provided any one of his adversaries would submit to a similar test. By a singular coincidence, which is alone sufficient to demonstrate to what a degree the passions of the people were excited, a Franciscan friar accepted the challenge, and professed himself ready to proceed to the proof. The mode of trial became the subject of serious deliberation among the chief officers of the republick. Two deputies were elected on behalf of each of the parties, to arrange and superintend this extraordinary contest. The combustibles were prepared, and over them was erected a scaffold, which afforded a commodious passage into the midst of the flames. On the morning of the day appointed, being the seventeenth of April 1498, Savonarola and his champion made their appearance, with a numerous procession of ecclesiasticks, Savonarola himself intonating with a tremendous voice, the psalm *Exurgat Deus et dissipentur inimici ejus*. His opponent, Fra Giuliano Rondinelli, attended by a few Franciscan monks, came sedately and silently to the place of trial; the flames were kindled, and the agitated spectators waited with impatience for the moment that should renew the miracle of the Chaldean furnace. Savonarola finding that the

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CHAP. X. the Franciscan was not to be deterred from the enterprise either by his vociferations, or by the sight of the flames, was obliged to have recourse to another expedient, and insisted that his champion Domenico, when he entered the fire, should bear the host along with him. This sacrilegious proposal shocked the whole assembly. The prelates who, together with the state deputies, attended the trial, exclaimed against an experiment which might subject the catholick faith to too severe a test, and bring a scandal upon their holy religion. Domenico, however, clung fast to the twig which his patron had thrown out, and positively refused to encounter the flames without this sacred talisman. This expedient, whilst it saved the life of the friar, ruined the credit of Savonarola. On his return to the convent of S. Marco, he was insulted by the populace, who bitterly reproached him, that after having encouraged them to cry *Viva Cristo*, he should impiously propose to commit him to the flames. Savonarola attempted to regain his authority by addressing them from the pulpit, but his enemies were too vigilant; seizing the opportunity of his disgrace, they first attacked the house of Francesco Valori, one of his most powerful partisans, who, together with his wife, was sacrificed to their fury. They then secured Savonarola, with his associate Domenico,

Domenico, and another friar of the same convent, and dragged them to prison. An assembly of ecclesiasticks and seculars, directed by an emissary of Alexander VI. sat in judgment upon them. The resolution and eloquence of Savonarola, on his first interview, intimidated his judges; and it was not till recourse was had to the implements of torture—the *ultima theologorum ratio*, that Savonarola betrayed his weakness, and acknowledged the fallacy of his pretensions to supernatural powers. His condemnation instantly followed; and the unhappy priest, with his two attendants, were led to execution in the same place, and with the same apparatus, as had been prepared for the contest; where, being first strangled, their bodies were committed to the flames; and, lest the city should be polluted by their remains, their ashes were carefully gathered and thrown into the Arno[r].

Death of Piero de' Medici.

From the time that Piero de' Medici quitted the city of Florence, he experienced a continual succession of mortifications and disappointments. Flattered,

[r] *Nerli, Comment. lib.* iv. *p.* 78. *Savonarolæ vita, tom.* ii. *seu additiones. Par.* 1674, *passim.*

CHAP. X. Flattered, deserted, encouraged, and betrayed, by the different potentates to whom he successively applied for assistance, his prospects became daily more unfavourable, and his return to Florence more improbable. In the mean time a new war had arisen in Italy. Louis XII. the successour of Charles VIII. after having, in conjunction with Ferdinand, king of Spain, accomplished the conquest of Naples, disagreed with him in the partition of the spoil, and Italy became the theatre of their struggle. On this occasion Piero entered into the service of the French, and was present at an engagement that took place between them and the Spaniards, on the banks of the Garigliano, in which they were defeated with great loss. In effecting his escape, Piero attempted to pass the river, but the boat in which he, with several other men of rank, had embarked, being laden with heavy cannon, sunk in the midst of the current, and Piero miserably perished, after having supported an exile of ten years. By his wife Alfonsina, he left a son named Lorenzo, and a daughter Clarice.

His character.

Few men have derived from nature greater advantages, and perhaps never any one enjoyed a better opportunity of improving them, than Piero de' Medici. A robust form, a vigorous constitution,

constitution, great personal strength and activity, and a share of talents beyond the common lot, were the endowments of his birth. To these was added a happy combination of external affairs, resulting from the opulence and respectability of his family, the powerful alliances by which it was strengthened, and the high reputation which his father had so deservedly acquired. But these circumstances, apparently so favourable to his success, were precisely the causes of his early ruin. Presuming on his security, he supposed that his authority could not be shaken, nor his purposes defeated. Forgetting the advice so often repeated to him by his father, *to remember that he was only a citizen of Florence*, he neglected or disdained to conciliate the affections of the people. His conduct was the exact reverse of that which his ancestors had so long and uniformly adopted, and was attended with the effects which might reasonably be expected from a dereliction of those maxims that had raised them to the honourable distinction which they had so long enjoyed. CHAP. X.

A few poetical compositions of Piero de' Medici, preserved in the Laurentian Library, though not hitherto printed, place his character in a more favourable point of view, and exhibit his

CHAP. X. his filial affection and his attachment to his native place in a very interesting light[a]. Of this the following sonnet may be a sufficient proof:

SONETTO.

Sonnet of Piero de' Medici.

'Sendo io national, e di te nato,
Muovati patria un poco il tuo figliuolo;
Fingiti almen pietosa del suo duolo,
Essendo in te nudrito ed allevato.
Ha ciaschedun del nascimento il fato,
Come l'uccello il suo garrire e volo;
Scusemi almen in ciò non esser solo,
Benchè solo al mio male io pur sia stato.
Et se può nulla in te mio antico affetto,
Per quella pietà ch 'n te pur regna
Non mi sia questo dono da te disdetto:
—Ch' almen in cener nella patria io vegna,
A riposar col padre mio diletto,
Che già ti fe si gloriosa e degna.

SONNET.

[a] They consist of twenty-one sonnets, which are found at the close of a manuscript volume of the poems of his father Lorenzo, *Plut.* xli. *Cod.* xxxviii. *No.* 3. Besides which Valerianus informs us, that he translated from Plutarch a treatise on conjugal love; *Valer. de. Lit. infel. lib.* ii.; but this performance has probably perished, there being no copy of it now to be found in the Laurentian Library.

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SONNET.

Thy offspring, FLORENCE, nurtur'd at thy breast,
Ah! let me yet thy kind indulgence prove;
Or if thou own no more a parent's love,
Thy pity sure may sooth my woes to rest.
Fate marks to each his lot: the same behest
That taught the bird thro' fields of air to rove,
And tunes his song, my vital tissue wove
Of grief and care, with darkest hues imprest.
But if, my fondness scorn'd, my prayer denied,
Death only bring the period of my woes,
Yet one dear hope shall mitigate my doom.
—If then my father's name was once thy pride,
Let my cold ashes find at last repose,
Safe in the shelter of his honour'd tomb.

Giovanni de' Medici.

Of the many ties by which Lorenzo had endeavoured to secure the prosperity of his family amidst the storms of fortune, and the ebbs and flows of popular opinion, one only now remained—that by which he had connected it with the church; but this alone proved sufficient for the purpose, and shows that in this, as in every other instance, his conduct was directed by motives of the soundest policy. After the expulsion of the family from Florence, the cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, finding that the endeavours of himself and his brothers to effect their

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their restoration were more likely to exasperate the Florentines than to promote that desirable event, desisted from any further attempts, and determined to wait with patience for a more favourable opportunity. He therefore quitted Italy, and whilst that country was the theatre of treachery and war, visited many parts of France and Germany. His dislike to Alexander VI. who had entered into an alliance with the Florentines, and was consequently adverse to the views of the exiles, was an additional motive for his absence. After the death of Alexander in the year 1503, he returned to Rome, and found in Julius II. a pontiff more just to his talents, and more favourable to his hopes. From this time he began to take an important part in the publick affairs of Italy, and was appointed legate in the war carried on by the pope, the Venetians, and the king of Spain, against Louis XII. Whilst invested with this dignity, he was taken prisoner by the French in the famous battle of Ravenna, but soon afterwards found an opportunity of effecting his escape, not, however, without great danger and difficulty. In the mean time new dissensions had sprung up at Florence, where the inhabitants, wearied with the fluctuations of a government, whose maxims and conduct were changed in the same

same rapid succession as its chief magistrates, were at length obliged to seek for a greater degree of stability, by electing a *Gonfaloniere* for life. This authority was intrusted to Piero Soderini, who, with more integrity than ability, exercised it for nearly ten years. His contracted views suited not with the circumstances of the times. The principal governments of Italy, with Julius at their head, had leagued together to free that country from the depredations of the French. Fearful of exciting the restless dispositions of the Florentines, and perhaps of endangering the continuance of his power, the *Gonfaloniere* kept aloof from a cause, on the success of which depended the tranquillity and independence of Italy. His reluctance to take an active part in the war was construed into a secret partiality to the interests of the French; and, whilst it rendered him odious to a great part of the citizens of Florence, drew upon him the resentment of the allied powers. The victory obtained by the French at Ravenna, dearly purchased with the death of the gallant Gaston de Foix, and the loss of near ten thousand men, proved the destruction of their enterprise; and as the cause of the French declined, that of the Medici gained ground, as well in Florence as in the rest of Italy. The prudence and

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and moderation of the cardinal enabled him to avail himself of these favourable dispositions without prematurely anticipating the consequences. During his residence at Rome he had paid a marked attention to the citizens of Florence who occasionally resorted there, without making any apparent distinction between those who had espoused and those who had been adverse to the cause of his family; and by his affability and hospitality, as well as by his attention to the interests of those who stood in need of his services, secured the esteem and good opinion of his fellow-citizens. Having thus prepared the way for his success, he took the earliest opportunity of turning the arms of the allied powers against Florence, for the avowed purpose of removing Piero Soderini from his office, and restoring the Medici to their rights as citizens. On the part of Soderini little resistance was made. The allies having succeeded in an attack upon the town of Prato, and the friends of the Medici having openly opposed the authority of Soderini, the tide of popular favour once more turned; and whilst the *Gonfaloniere* with difficulty effected his escape, the cardinal made his entrance into his native place, accompanied by his younger brother Giuliano, his nephew Lorenzo, and his cousin Giulio

Restoration of the Medici to Florence.

Giulio de' Medici, the latter of whom had been his constant attendant during all the events of his publick life[t]. CHAP. X.

The restoration of the Medici, although effected by an armed force, was not disgraced by the bloodshed of any of the citizens, and a few only of their avowed enemies were ordered to absent themselves from Florence. Scarcely was the tranquillity of the place restored when intelligence was received of the death of Julius II. The cardinal lost no time in repairing to Rome, where, on the eleventh day of March 1513, being then only thirty-seven years of age, he was elected supreme head of the church, and assumed the name of Leo X. The high reputation which he had acquired not only counterbalanced any objections arising from his youth, but rendered his election a subject of general satisfaction; and the inhabitants of Florence, without adverting to the consequences, exulted in an event which seemed likely to contribute not less to the security than to the honour of their country. The commencement of his pontificate was distinguished by an act of clemency Elevation of Leo X.

[t] *Guicciar. Storia d' Italia, lib.* x. *Razzi vita di Piero Soderini. Padova,* 1737, *p.* 70, *&c.*

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mency which seemed to realize the high expectations that had been formed of it. A general amnesty was published at Florence, and the banished citizens restored to their country. Piero Soderini, who had taken refuge in Turkey, was invited by the pope to Rome, where he resided many years under his protection, and enjoyed the society and respect of the prelates and other men of eminence who frequented the court, being distinguished, during the remainder of his life, by the honourable title of the *Gonfaloniere*[u].

Leo promotes his relations.

The elevation of Leo X. to the pontificate established the fortunes of the Medici on a permanent foundation. Naturally munificent to all, Leo was lavish in bestowing upon the different branches of his own family the highest honours and most lucrative preferments of the church. Giulio de' Medici was created archbishop of Florence, and was soon afterwards admitted into the sacred college, where he acquired such influence, as to secure the pontifical chair, in which he succeeded Adrian VI. who filled it only ten months after the death of Leo. The daughters of Lorenzo, Maddalena the

[u] *Razzi vita di Piero Soderini, p.* 85.

the wife of Francesco Cibo, Contessina the wife of Piero Ridolfi, and Lucrezia the wife of Giacopo Salviati, gave no less than four cardinals to the Romish church; there being two of the family of Salviati, and one of each of the others. Profiting by the example of his predecessors, Leo lost no opportunity of aggrandizing his relations, well knowing that, in order to secure to them any lasting benefit, it was necessary that they should be powerful enough to defend themselves, after his death, from the rapacious aims of succeeding pontiffs, who, he was well aware, would probably pay as little regard to his family, as he had himself, in some instances, paid to the friends and families of his predecessors[v].

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[v] Notwithstanding his precautions, Leo could not, on all occasions, preserve his surviving relations from the insults and injuries of his successours. Paul III. Alessandro Farnese, had in his youth been particularly favoured by Lorenzo de' Medici, who, in a letter which yet remains from him to Lanfredini, his envoy at Rome, thus expresses himself respecting him: "Vi lo raccom-" mandiate quanto farei Pietro mio figlio; e vi prego " lo introduciate e lo raccommandiate caldissimamente " a N. S. (il papa) che non potreste farmi maggior " piacere," &c. Yet, when the same Alessandro had arrived at the pontificate, he so far forgot or disregarded his early obligations, as forcibly to dispossess Lucrezia, the

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Restores his dominions to peace.

The ponti .cate of Leo X. is celebrated as one of the most prosperous in the annals of the Romish church. At the time when he assumed the chair, the calamities of Italy were at their highest pitch; that country being the theatre of a war, in which not only all its governments were engaged, but which was rendered yet more sanguinary by the introduction of the French, Helvetian, and Spanish troops. A council, which had long established itself at Pisa, under the influence and protection of the king of France thwarted the measures, and at times overawed the authority of the holy see; and, in addition to all her other distresses, Italy laboured under great apprehensions from the Turks, who constantly threatened a descent on that unhappy country. The address and perseverance of Leo surmounted the difficulties which he had to encounter; and during his pontificate the papal dominions enjoyed a greater degree of tranquillity than any other state in Italy. In his relations with foreign powers, his conduct is no less entitled to approbation. During the contests

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the daughter of his benefactor, then in a very advanced age, of her residence in Rome, to make way for one of his nephews. This incident is related by Varchi with proper indignation. *Storia Fiorentina, lib.* xvi. *p.* 666.

contest that took place between those powerful monarchs Charles V. and Francis I. he distinguished himself by his moderation, his vigilance, and his political address; on which account he is justly celebrated by an eminent historian of our own country, as "the only prince of the "age who observed the motions of the two "contending monarchs with a prudent attention, "or who discovered a proper solicitude for the "publick safety"[w]. CHAP. X.

Leo was not however aware, that whilst he was composing the troubles which the ambition of his neighbours, or the misconduct of his predecessors, had occasioned, he was exciting a still more formidable adversary, that was destined, by a slow but certain progress, to sap the foundations of the papal power, and to alienate that spiritual allegiance which the Christian world had kept inviolate for so many centuries. Under the control of Leo, the riches that flowed from every part of Europe to Rome, as to the heart of the ecclesiastical system, were again poured out through a thousand channels, till the sources became inadequate to the expenditure. To supply this deficiency, he availed himself Rise of the reformation.

[w] *Robertson, Hist. of Cha.* V. *book.* i.

CHAP. X. himself of various expedients, which, whilst they effected for a time the intended purpose, roused the attention of the people to the enormities and abuses of the church, and in some measure drew aside that sacred veil, which, in shrouding her from the prying eyes of the vulgar, has always been her safest preservative. The open sale of dispensations and indulgences for the most enormous and disgraceful crimes was too flagrant not to attract general notice. Encouraged by the dissatisfaction which was thus excited, a daring reformer arose, and, equally regardless of the threats of secular power, and the denunciations of the Roman see, ventured to oppose the opinion of an individual to the infallible determinations of the church. At this critical juncture, Luther found that support which he might in vain have sought at any other period, and an inroad was made into the sanctuary, which has ever since been widening, and will probably continue to widen, till the mighty fabrick, the work of so many ages, shall be laid in ruins[x]. It is not however so

[x] The causes and progress of the reformation are traced by Dr. Robertson, in his History of Charles the V. book ii. in a manner that would almost render any further elucidation unnecessary, even if it were more intimately

so much for the tenets of their religious creed, as for the principles upon which they founded their dissent, that the reformers are entitled to the thanks of posterity. That right of private judgment which they claimed for themselves, they could not refuse to others; and by a mode of reasoning as simple as it was decisive, mankind arrived at the knowledge of one of those great truths which form the basis of human happiness. It appeared that the denunciations of the church were as ineffectual to condemn, as its absolution was to exculpate; and, instead of an intercourse between the man and his priest, an intercourse took place between his conscience and his God.

Age of Leo X.

But turning from the advantages which the world has derived from the errours of Leo X. we may be allowed for a moment to inquire what

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intimately connected with my subject. This celebrated historian has taken occasion to refute an assertion made by Guicciardini, and, after him, by Fr. Paolo, that Leo X. bestowed the profits arising from the sale of indulgences in Saxony, upon his sister Maddalena, the wife of Francesco Cibo. *Guicciar. lib.* xiii. *Sarpi, Storia del Concil. Trident. cap.* i.

Robertson, Hist. Cha. V. book ii. *in note.*

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what it owes to his talents and to his virtues. No sooner was he raised to the papal chair, than Rome assumed once more its ancient character, and became the seat of genius, magnificence, letters, and arts. One of the first acts of his pontificate was to invite to his court two of the most elegant Latin scholars that modern times have produced, Piero Bembo and Giacopo Sadoleti; on each of whom he conferred the rank of cardinal. The most celebrated professors of literature from every part of Europe were induced by liberal pensions to fix their residence at Rome, where a permanent establishment was formed for the study of the Greek tongue, under the direction of Giovanni Lascar. The affability, the munificence, the judgment, and the taste of this splendid pontiff, are celebrated by a considerable number of learned men, who witnessed his accomplishments, or partook of his bounty. Succeeding times have been equally disposed to do justice to so eminent a patron of letters, and have considered the age of Leo X. as rivalling that of Augustus. Leo has not however escaped the reproach of having been too lavish of his favours to authors of inferiour talents, and of having expended in pompous spectacles and theatrical representations that wealth which ought to have been devoted to better purposes.

poses[y]. But shall we condemn his conduct, if those, who had no claims on his justice, were the objects of his bounty? or may it not be doubted whether this disposition was not more favourable to the promotion of letters, than a course of conduct more discriminating and severe? Whatever kindness he might show to those who endeavoured to amuse his leisure by their levity, their singularity, or their buffoonery, no instances can be produced of his having rewarded them by such distinguished favours as he constantly bestowed on real merit; and whilst we discover amongst those who shared his friendship and partook of his highest bounty, the names of Bembo, Vida, Ariosto, Sadoleti, Casa, and Flaminio, we may readily excuse the effects of that superabundant kindness which rather marked the excess of his liberality than the imperfection of his judgment.

The Laurentian Library restored.

In the attention paid by Leo X. to the collecting and preserving ancient manuscripts, and other memorials of literature, he emulated the

[y] *Tirab. Storia della Let. Ital. v.* viii. *part* i. *p.* 19. *Andres. orig. e progressi d' ogni Letteratura, v.* i. *p.* 380.

CHAP. X. the example of his father, and by his perseverance and liberality at length succeeded in restoring to its former splendour the celebrated library which, on the expulsion of Piero de' Medici, had become a prey to the fury or the rapacity of the populace. Such of these valuable articles as had escaped the sacrilegious hands of the plunderers, had been seized upon for the use of the Florentine state; but in the year 1496, the publick treasury being exhausted, and the city reduced to great extremity, the magistrates were under the necessity of selling them to the monks of the fraternity of S. Marco, for the sum of three thousand ducats[z]. Whilst these valuable works were deposited at the convent, they experienced a less publick but perhaps a more, destructive calamity, many of them having been distributed as presents by Savonarola, the principal of the monastery, to the cardinals, and other eminent men, by whose favour

[z] Eodem anno libri heredum olim Petri Medicis a conventu nostro trium milium Ducatorum pretio comparati, quos supra memoravimus in horrendo casu nostro, ex jusso dominationis Florentinæ in palatium comportatos, et per inventarium resignatos, mense Octobri, in conventum hunc S. Marci revecti sunt, novis stipulationibus factis, &c.

Maricani annal. part i. *ap. Mehus. Amb. Travers. vita, p.* 72, *in præf.*

favour he sought to shelter himself from the resentment of the pope[a]. When the Florentines destroyed their golden calf, and the wretched priest expiated by his death his folly and his crimes, apprehensions were entertained that the library of the Medici would once more be exposed to the rapacity of the people; but some of the youth of the noblest families of Florence, with a laudable zeal for the preservation of this monument of their national glory, associated themselves together, and undertook to guard it till the frenzy of the populace had again subsided[b]. After the death of Savonarola, the fraternity having fallen into discredit, and being in their turn obliged to sell the library, it was purchased from them by Leo X. then cardinal de' Medici, and in the year 1508 was removed by him to Rome, where it continued during

[a] Etiam de' libri di Piero de' Medici, i quali nella Libreria di S. Marco in buona parte si ridussono, fece parte a cardinali, per cui mezzo delle scomuniche e altri processi contragli si difendeva. Tanta forza avevano in Firenze le sue arti.

MS. di Piero Parenti. cit. da Tirab. Storia della Let. Ital. v. vi. *part* i. *p.* 106.

[b] *Tirab. ut sup.*

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Giuliano de' Medici, duke of Nemours.

Giuliano de' Medici, the third son of Lorenzo, was more distinguished by his attention to the cause of literature, and by his mild and affable disposition, than by his talents for political affairs. On the return of the family to Florence, he had been intrusted by his brother, then the cardinal de' Medici, with the direction of the Florentine state; but it soon appeared that he had not sufficient energy to control the jarring dispositions of the Florentines. He therefore resigned his authority to Lorenzo, the son of his brother Piero de' Medici, and on the

the elevation of Leo X. took up his residence at Rome; where, under the title of captain-general of the church, he held the chief command of the papal troops. By the favour of the pope he soon afterwards obtained extensive possessions in Lombardy, and having intermarried with Filiberta, sister of Charles duke of Savoy, and a descendant of the house of Bourbon, was honoured by Francis I. with the title of duke of Nemours. Of his gratitude, an instance is recorded which it would be unjust to his memory to omit. During his exile from Florence, he had found an hospitable asylum with Guid'ubaldo di Montefeltro, duke of Urbino, who on his death left his dominions to his adopted son, Francesco Maria delle Rovere. Incited by the entreaties of his nephew Lorenzo, Leo X. formed the design of depriving Rovere of his possessions, under the usual pretext of their having escheated to the church for want of legitimate heirs, and of vesting them in Lorenzo, with the title of duke of Urbino; but the representations of Giuliano prevented for a time the execution of his purpose; and it was not till after his death that Leo disgraced his pontificate by this signal instance of ecclesiastical rapacity. If we may give credit to Ammirato, Giuliano at one time entertained the ambitious hope of obtaining

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obtaining the crown of Naples[c]; but if such a design was in contemplation, it is probable that he was incited by his more enterprising and ambitious brother, who perhaps sought to revive the claims of the papal see upon a kingdom, to the government of which Giuliano could, in his own right, advance no pretensions. As a patron of learning, he supported the ancient dignity of his family. He is introduced to great advantage in the celebrated dialogue of Bembo on the Italian tongue[d], and in the yet more distinguished work of Castiglione, entitled *Il libro del Cortegiano*[e]. In the Laurentian Library several

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[c] *Ammir. Ist. Fior. lib.* xxix. *vol.* iii. *fa.* 315.

[d] PROSE DI M. PIETRO BEMBO, NELLE QUALI SI RAIGIONA DELLA VOLGAR LINGUA; dedicated to the cardinal Giulio de' Medici, afterwards Clement VII. first printed at Venice by *Giovan Tacuino, nel mese di Settembre del* MDXXV. *cum privilegio di Papa Clemente, &c.*

[e] *In Venetia nelle case d' Aldo Romano, e d' Andrea d' Asola suo suocero, nell' anno* MDXXVIII. *del mese d' Aprile, in fol.* This work has frequently been reprinted under the more concise title of *Il Cortegiano*, by which it is also cited in the *Biblioteca Italiana* of Fontanini; but Apostolo Zeno, pleased with every opportunity of reproving the author whom

several of his sonnets are yet preserved[f]; and some specimens of his composition are adduced by Crescimbeni, which, if they display not any extraordinary spirit of poetry, sufficiently prove, that, to a correct judgment, he united an elegant taste[g].

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Naturally

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whom he has undertaken to comment upon, shrewdly observes, in his notes on that work, "Altro è il dire "semplicemente, *il Cortegiano*, come il Fontanini vor- "rebbe; e altro, *Il libro del Cortegiano*, come il Casti- "glione ha voluto dire, e lo ha detto: la prima maniera "indicherebbe di voler descrivere *il Cortegiano*, per quello "che è; e la seconda dinota di volergli insegnare qual "esser deve."

Zeno, in not. alla Bib. Ital. di Fontan. v. ii. *fl.* 353.

[f] PLUT. xlvi. *Cod.* xxv. *No.* 3. Another copy of his poems remains in MS. in the Strozzi Library at Florence.

[g] *Crescimb. Comment. v.* iii. *fl.* 338. Where the author confounds Giuliano, the son of Lorenzo de' Medici, with Giuliano his brother, who lost his life in the conspiracy of the Pazzi: and even cites the authority of Politiano, "Che i versi volgari di lui erano maraviglia gravi, "e pieni di nobili sentimenti," as referring to the writings of the younger Giuliano, although such opinion was expressed by Politiano respecting the works of Giuliano the brother of Lorenzo, before Giuliano his son was born.

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Naturally of an infirm constitution, Giuliano did not long enjoy his honours. Finding his health on the decline, he removed to the monastery at Fiesole, in the expectation of deriving advantage from his native air; but his hopes were frustrated, and he died there in the month of March 1516, not having then fully completed his thirty-seventh year. His death was sincerely lamented by a great majority of the citizens of Florence, whose favour he had conciliated in a high degree by his affability, moderation, and inviolable regard to his promises[h]. His

[h] Ariosto has addressed a beautiful canzone to Filiberta of Savoy, the widow of Giuliano, commencing, *Anima eletta, che nel mondo folle*, in which the shade of the departed husband apostrophizes his surviving wife. The following lines, referring to Lorenzo the Magnificent, may serve to show the high veneration in which the poet held his memory:

" Questo sopra ogni lume in te risplende,
" Se ben quel tempo che sì ratto corse,
" Tenesti di *Nemorae*
" Meco scettro ducal di là da' monti;
" Se ben tua bella mano freno torse,
" Al paese gentil che Appenin fende,
" E l' alpe e il mar difende:
" Nè tanto val, che a questo pregio monti,
" Che'l

His tomb, in the sacristy of the church of S. Lorenzo at Florence, one of the most successful efforts of the genius of Michelagnolo, may compensate him for the want of that higher degree of reputation which he might have acquired in a longer life. His statue, seated, and in a Roman military habit, may be considered rather as characteristick of his office, as general of the church, than of his exploits. The figures which recline on each side of the sarcophagus, and are intended to represent day and night, have been the admiration of succeeding artists; but their allegorical purport may admit of a latitude of interpretation. Had the conquests of Giuliano rivalled those of Alexander the Great, we might have conjectured, with Vasari, that the artist meant to express the extent of his glory, limited only by the confines of

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" Che'l sacro onor de l'erudite fronti,
" Quel Tosco e'n terra e'en cielo amato LAURO,
" Socer ti fu, le cui mediche fronde
" Spesso a le piaghe, donde
" Italia morì poi, furo ristauro :
" Che fece al Indo e al Mauro,
" Sentir l' odor de suoi rami soavi ;
" Onde pendean le chiavi
" Che tenean chiuso il tempio de la guerre,
" Che poi fu aperto, E NON E PIÙ CHI'L SERRE."

CHAP. X. of the earth[1]; but the hyperbole would be too extravagant; and the judicious spectator will perhaps rather regard them as emblematical of the constant change of sublunary affairs, and the brevity of human life.

Ippolito de' Medici.

By his wife Filiberta of Savoy, Giuliano de' Medici left no children; but, before his marriage, he had a natural son, who became an acknowledged branch of the family of the Medici, and, like the rest of his kindred, acquired, within the limits of a short life, a considerable share of reputation. This was the celebrated Ippolito de' Medici, who, dignified with the rank of cardinal, and possessed, by the partiality of Clement VII. of an immense revenue, was at once the patron, the companion, and the rival of all the poets, the musicians and the wits of his time. Without territories, and without subjects, Ippolito maintained at Bologna a court far more splendid than that of any Italian potentate. His associates and attendants, all of whom could boast of some peculiar merit or distinction which had entitled them to his notice, generally formed a body of about three hundred persons. Shocked at his profusion, which only the revenues of the church

[1] *Vasari vita di M. A. Buonarotti.*

church were competent to supply, Clement VII. is said to have engaged the *maestro di casa* of Ippolito to remonstrate with him on his conduct, and to request that he would dismiss some of his attendants as unnecessary to him. "No," replied Ippolito, "I do not retain them in my "court because I have occasion for their ser- "vices, but because they have occasion for "mine[k]." His translation of the second book of the Eneid into Italian blank verse is considered as one of the happiest efforts of the language, and has frequently been reprinted[l]. Amongst the collections of Italian poetry may also

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[k] *Tirab. Storia della Let. Ital. v.* vii. *par.* i. *p.* 23.

[l] The first edition is that of Rome, *apud Antonium Bladum*, 1538, without the name of the author, who, at the foot of his dedication to a lady, whom he designates only by the appellation of *Illustrissima Signora*, assumes the title of *Il cavaliero Errante*. The second edition is entitled IL SECONDO DI VERGILIO *in lingua volgare volto da* HIPPOLITO DE' MEDICI *cardinale*. At the close we read, *In citta di Castello per Antonio Mazochi Cremonese, et Niccolo de Guccii da Corna, ad instantia di M. Giovan Gallo Dottor de leggi da Castello nel Giorno* 20 *de Luglio* 1539. Several subsequent editions have appeared, as well separately, as united with the other books of the Eneid, translated by different persons.

CHAP. X. also be found some pieces of his own composition, which do credit to his talents[m].

Lorenzo de' Medici, duke of Urbino.

On the voluntary resignation by Giuliano de' Medici of the direction of the Florentine state, that important trust had been confided by Leo X. to his brother Lorenzo, who, with the assistance of the cardinal Giulio de' Medici, directed the helm of government according to the will of the pope; but the honour of holding the chief rank in the republick, although it had gratified the just ambition of his illustrious grandfather, was inadequate to the pretensions of Lorenzo; and the family of Rovere, after a vigorous defence, in which Lorenzo received a wound which had nearly proved mortal, was obliged to relinquish to him the sovereignty of Urbino, of which he received from the pope the ducal investiture in the year 1516[n]. After the death of his uncle Giuliano, he was appointed captain-general of the papal troops, but his reputation for military skill scarcely stands higher than that of his predecessor. In the year

[m] Some of them are cited by Crescimbeni, *della volgar poesia*, *lib.* ii. *vol.* ii. *p.* 368.

[n] *Nerli Comment. lib.* vi. *p.* 130.

year 1518, he married Magdeleine de Boulogne, of the royal house of France, and the sole fruit of this union was Catharine de' Medici, afterwards the queen of Henry II.[o] The birth of the daughter cost the mother her life; and her husband survived her only a few days, having, if we may credit Ammirato, fallen a victim to that loathsome disorder, the peculiar scourge of licentiousness, which had then recently commenced its ravages in Europe[p]. His

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[o] Si, comme les poëtes l'ont dit, l'ancienne Hecube, avant de mettre Paris au monde, etait troublée par des songes effrayans; quels noirs fantômes devaient agiter les nuits de Magdaleine de la Tour, enceinte de Catherine de Medicis? *Tenh. Mem. Gen. liv.* xx. *fi.* 5.

[p] *Ammir. Ist. Fior. lib.* xxix. *v.* ii. *fi.* 335. This disorder, which was first known in Italy about the year 1495, was not in its commencement supposed to be the result of sexual intercourse, but was attributed to the impure state of the air, to the simple touch or breath of a disordered person, or even to the use of an infected knife. Hence for a considerable time no discredit attached to the patient; and the authors of that period attribute without hesitation the death of many eminent persons, as well ecclesiastical as secular, to this complaint. In the Laurentian Library (*Plut.* lxxiii. *cod.* 38) is a MS. entitled *Saphati Physici de morbo Gallico liber*, dedicated by the author Giuliano Tanio, of Prato, to Leo X. in which he thus adverts to a learned professor, who was probably

CHAP. X. His tomb, of the sculpture of Michelagnolo, is found amongst the splendid monuments of his family

probably one of the first victims of this disease: "Nos "anno MCCCCXCV. extrema æstate, egregium utriusque "juris doctorem Dominum Philippum Decium, Papi- "ensem, in Florentino Gymnasio Prati, Pisis tunc "rebellibus, publice legentem, hac labe affectum ipsi "conspeximus." From the same author we learn that the disorder was supposed to have originated in a long continuance of hot and moist weather, which occurred in the same year: "Ex magna pluvia similis labes apparuit, "ex quibus arguunt hunc nostræ ætatis morbum ex simili "causa ortum esse, ex calida scilicet, humidaque intem- "perie, quia ex pluvia scilicet anni MCCCCLXXXXV. nonis "Decembris emissa, qua Roma facta est navigabilis, ac "tota fere Italia inundationes passa est," &c. These authorities are greatly strengthened by that of the illustrious Fracastoro, who was not only the best Latin poet, but the most eminent physician of his age, and who, in his *Syphilis*, accounts for the disorder from similar causes. After adverting to the opinion that it had been brought into Europe from the western world, then lately discovered, he adds:

"At vero, si rite fidem observata merentur
"Non ita censendum: nec certe credere par est
"Esse peregrinam nobis, transque æquora vectam
"Contagem: quoniam in primis ostendere multos
"Possumus, attactu qui nullius, hanc tamen ipsam
"Sponte sua sensere luem, primique tulere.
"Præterea, et tantum terrarum tempore parvo
"Contages non una simul potuisset obire."

It

family in the church of S. Lorenzo at Florence. He appears seated, in the attitude of deep meditation. CHAP. X.

It is remarkable also, that throughout the whole poem he has not considered this disease as the peculiar result of licentious intercourse, on which account it is perfectly unexceptionable in point of decorum. Even the shepherd *Syphilus*, introduced as an instance of its effects, is represented as having derived it from the resentment, not of Venus, but of Phœbus, excited by the adoration paid by the shepherds to Alcithous, and the neglect of his own altars; or, in other words, to the too fervid state of the atmosphere. Had the disorder in its origin been accompanied by the idea of disgrace or criminality, which attends it in modern times, the author of this poem would scarcely have denominated it,

" Infanda lues, quam nostra videtis
" Corpora depasci, quam nulli aut denique pauci
" Vitamus."

The poem of Fracastoro was first published in the year 1530; but an Italian poem on the same subject, by Niccolo Campana of Siena, was printed at that place in 1519, and again at Venice in 1537, entitled *Lamento di quel Tribulato di Strascino Campana Senese sopra el male incognito el quale tratta de la patientia et impatientia.* The style of this poem is extremely gross and ludicrous; and the author, in the supposed excess of his sufferings, indulges himself in the most extravagant and profane ideas, as to the nature and origin of the complaint. At one time he supposes it to be the same disorder as that which God permitted Satan to inflict upon Job:

" Allor

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tion. At his feet recline two emblematical figures, the rivals of those which adorn the tomb of Giuliano, and which are intended to represent morning and evening. Ariosto has also celebrated his memory in some of his most beautiful verses[q]. Like the Egyptians, who embalm a putrid carcase with the richest odours, the artist and the poet too often lavish their divine incense on the most undeserving of mankind.

Prior

" Allor Sathan con tal mal pien di vitio,
" Diede a Jobbe amarissimo supplitio."

Again, he asserts it to be the complaint of Simon the leper;

" Quando Cristo guarì Simon lebbroso,
" Era di questo mal pessimo iniquo."

But on no occasion does he ascribe the rise of the disorder to the cause which, from the nature of his poem, might have been expected. I shall only observe, that the use of the grand mineral specifick is expressly pointed out in both these poems, as the only certain remedy.

[q] Such at least I conjecture to be the purport of his poem, which commences,

" Nella stagion che'l bel tempo rimena,
" Di mia man posi un ramuscel di Lauro."
Rime del Ariosto, fl. 25. apl. Giolito, 1557.

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Alessandro de' Medici.

Prior to his marriage with Magdeleine of Boulogne, the duke of Urbino had an illegitimate son, named Alessandro, in whose person was consummated the destruction of the liberties of Florence. It was commonly supposed that Alessandro was the offspring of the duke by an African slave, at the time when he, with the rest of the family, were restored to Florence; and this opinion received confirmation from his thick lips, crisped hair, and dark complexion. But it is yet more probable that he was the son of Clement VII. Such at least was the information given to the historian Ammirato by the grand duke Cosmo I. at the time when he read to him the memoirs which he had prepared respecting his family; and the predilection of the pontiff for this equivocal descendant of the house of Medici adds probability to the report[r]. But whatever was his origin, the circumstances of the times, and the ambition of those who protected his infancy, compensated for the disadvantages of his birth, and his want of inherent merit. On failure of the legitimate branch of Cosmo de' Medici, usually styled the father of his country, derived through Lorenzo

[r] *Ammir. Ist. Fior. lib.* xxx. *v.* iii. *fi.* 335.

CHAP. X. Lorenzo the Magnificent, Alessandro and Ippolito became necessary implements in the hands of Clement VII. to prevent the credit and authority of the family from passing to the collateral branch derived from Lorenzo the brother of Cosmo, which had gradually risen to great distinction in the state, and of which it will now be necessary to give a brief account.

Descendants of Lorenzo de' Medici, the brother of Cosmo.

Pierfrancesco de' Medici, the son of the elder Lorenzo, to whom we have before had occasion to advert[s], died in the year 1459, having bequeathed his immense possessions, obtained from his share in the profits acquired by the extensive traffick of the family, to his two sons, Lorenzo and Giovanni. Following the example of their father, and emulous rather of wealth than of honours, the sons of Pierfrancesco had for several years confined themselves to the limits of a private condition, although they had occasionally filled the chief offices of the republick, in common with other respectable citizens. On the expulsion of Piero, the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, from Florence, in the year 1494, they endeavoured to avail themselves of his misconduct, and of the importance which

[s] *v. ante, vol.* I. *fi.* 181.

which they had gradually acquired, to aspire to the chief direction of the republick, and devesting themselves of the invidious name of Medici, assumed that of *Popolani*. The restoration of the descendants of Lorenzo the Magnificent to Florence, the elevation of his second son to the pontificate, and the series of prosperity enjoyed by the family under his auspices, and under those of Clement VII. had repressed their ambition, or frustrated their hopes; and Lorenzo and Giovanni, the sons of Pierfrancesco, passed through life in a subordinate rank, the former of them leaving at his death a son, named Pierfrancesco, and the latter a son Giovanni, to inherit their immense wealth, and perpetuate the hereditary rivalship of the two families[t]. But whilst the descendants of Cosmo, the father of his country, existed only in females, or in a spurious offspring, those of his brother Lorenzo continued in a legitimate succession of males, and were invigorated with talents the most formidable to their rivals, and the most flattering

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[t] Furono i due fratelli richissimi—di meglio che centocinquanta mila scudi, e possedevano di beni stabili, fra gli altri la casa grande di Firenze, il palazzo di Fiesole, di Trebbio, di Caffagiolc, e di Castello.

Ald. Manucc. vita di Cosmo, v. i. *fi.* 27.

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flattering to their own hopes. Adopting from his youth a military life, Giovanni de' Medici became one of the most celebrated commanders that Italy had ever produced. By the appellation of captain of the *bande nere*, his name carried terrour amongst his enemies. His courage was of the most ferocious kind. Equally insensible to pity and to danger, his opponents denominated him *Il gran Diavolo*[u]. As the fervour of youth subsided, the talents of the commander began to be developed; but in the midst of his honours his career was terminated by a cannon ball, in the twenty-eighth year of his age. By his wife Maria Salviati, the offspring of Lucrezia, one of the daughters of Lorenzo the Magnificent, he left a son, Cosmo de' Medici, who, after the death of Alessandro, obtained the permanent sovereignty of Tuscany, and was the first who assumed the title of Grand Duke.

Giovanni de' Medici.

The younger Pierfrancesco left also a son, named Lorenzo, who, as well on account of his

Lorenzino de' Medici.

[u] *Varchi, Storia Fior. lib.* ii. *p.* 25. *Ed. Leyden.* The mother of Giovanni was Caterina Sforza, the widow of Girolamo Riario, who, after the death of her husband, had married the elder Giovanni de' Medici. *v. ante p.* 222.

his diminutive person, as to distinguish him from others of his kindred of the same name, was usually denominated *Lorenzino*, and who was destined with his own hand to terminate the contest between the two families. Though small of stature, Lorenzino was active and well proportioned. His complexion was dark, his countenance serious: when he smiled it seemed to be by constraint. His mother, who was of the powerful family of Soderini, had carefully attended to his education; and as his capacity was uncommonly quick, he made an early proficiency in polite letters. His elegant comedy entitled *Aridosio*, still ranks with those works which are selected as models of the Italian language[v]. Enterprising, restless, fond of commotions, and full of the examples of antiquity, he had addicted himself when young to the society of Filippo Strozzi, who to an ardent love

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[v] Crescimbeni informs us, that this comedy was written by Lorenzino *in versi vulgari*, and printed at Bologna in 1548; and that it is also found in prose, printed at Lucca in the same year, and reprinted at Florence in 1595. *Della volgar Poesie, vol.* v. *p.* 141. Crescimbeni is however mistaken; the edition of Bologna 1548 is now before me, and is wholly written in prose. That of Florence, 1595, is enumerated by the academicians *Della Crusca* as one of the *Testi di Lingua*.

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love of liberty united an avowed contempt for all the political and religious institutions of his time. The talents and accomplishments of Lorenzino recommended him to Clement VII. under whose countenance he resided for some time at the Roman court; but an extravagant adventure deprived him of the favour of the pope, and compelled him to quit the city. It appeared one morning, that, during the preceding night, the statues in the arch of Constantine, and in other parts of the city, had been broken and defaced; a circumstance which so exasperated the pope, that he issued positive orders that whoever had committed the outrage, except it should appear to be the cardinal Ippolito de' Medici, should be immediately hanged[w]. This exception indeed strongly implies that the cardinal was not free from suspicion; but whoever was the delinquent, Lorenzino bore the whole odium of the affair; and it required all the influence that Ippolito possessed with the pope to

[w] It has been suggested to me by the very respectable authority of Sir H. Englefield, that the heads of these statues and bas relievos were more probably stolen by Lorenzino for the sake of their beauty. It is well known that the sculpture for the arch of Constantine was collected from other buildings, mostly from the forum of Trajan; and it is said that the heads thus purloined are yet extant in the museum at Florence.

to rescue his kinsman from the denunciations issued against the offender. Lorenzino gladly took the earliest opportunity of quitting the city, and retreated to his native place, where, transferring his resentment from the dead to the living, he soon afterwards acted a principal part in a much more important transaction[x]. CHAP. X.

To the energy and activity of Lorenzino, and the courage of Giovanni de' Medici, Clement VII. could only oppose the dissipation and inexperience of Ippolito and Alessandro; but the turbulent disposition of the Florentines seconded his views, and the premature death of Giovanni, whilst it exposed his dominions to the ravages of the German troops, relieved him from his apprehensions of his most dangerous rival[y]. Having prevailed on the emperour and the Alessandro assumes the sovereignty of Florence.

[x] *Varchi, Storia Fior. lib.* XV. *fi.* 618.

[y] The authority of the senator Nerli leaves no room for doubt on this head. "Non poteva quella morte "seguire in tempo, ch'ella desse più universale dispia- "cere, nè anco in tempo, che il papa più la stimasse, "perchè s'ella seguiva in altri tempi, che sua Santita "non avesse avuto sì urgente pericolo sopra il capo, non "gli arrecava per aventura dispiacere alcuno, rima- "nendo

CHAP. X. the king of France to concur in his design, he seized the opportunity afforded him by the civil dissensions of the Florentines, and, in the year 1532, compelled them to place at the head of the government Alessandro de' Medici, with the title of *Doge* of the Florentine republick[z]. The authority of Alessandro was soon afterwards strengthened

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" nendo sicuro, e libero della gelosia grande, ch' egli " aveva del nome solamente del Sig. Giovanni, rispetto " agl' interessi, e alla proprietà d'Alessandro, e d'Ippo- " lito, i quali desiderava che fussero quelli, che posse- " dessero lo stato, le fàcultà, e la grandezza di casa " Medici." *Nerli, Commcnt. lib.* vii. *fi.* 145.

[z] Alessandro is generally styled by the Italian authors the *first duke of Florence;* but in this they are not strictly accurate. His title of *duke* was derived from Città, or Cività di Penna, and had been assumed by him several years before he obtained the direction of the Florentine state. It must also be observed, that Alessandro did not, as Robertson conceives, " enjoy the same absolute " dominion as his family have retained to the present " times," *Hist. Cha.* V. *book* v. he being only declared chief or prince of the republick, and his authority being in some measure counteracted or restrained by two councils chosen from the citizens, for life, one of which consisted of forty-eight, and the other of two hundred members. *Varchi, Storia Flor. fi.* 497. *Nerli Com. lib.* xi. *fi.* 257. 264. These distinctions are deserving of notice, as they serve to show the gradual progress by which a free country is deprived of its liberties.

strengthened by his marriage with Margaretta of Austria, a natural daughter of the emperour Charles V. The cardinal Ippolito, jealous of his success, had attempted to preoccupy the government; disappointed in his hopes, and disgusted with his ecclesiastical trappings, which ill suited the rapidity of his motions and the vivacity of his character, he united his efforts with those of Filippo Strozzi, who had married Clarice, the sister of Lorenzo duke of Urbino, to deprive Alessandro of his new dignity; but before the arrangement could be made for the meditated attack, Ippolito suddenly died of poison, administered to him by one of his domesticks[a], leaving his competitor in the undisturbed possession of his newly-acquired power.

Alessandro assassinated by Lorenzino.

The period, however, now approached, which was to transfer the dominion of Florence from the descendants of Lorenzo the Magnificent,

[a] The person who administered the poison was said to be Giovan-Andrea di Borgo San Sepolcro, the steward or bailiff of Ippolito, who was supposed to have effected this treachery at the instance of Alessandro; and this suspicion received confirmation by his having escaped punishment, although he confessed the crime; and by his having afterwards been received at the court of Alessandro at Florence. *Varchi, Storia Fior. fl.* 566.

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cent to the kindred stock. In the secure possession of power, Alessandro knew no restraint. Devoted to the indulgence of an amorous passion, he sought its gratification among women of all descriptions, married and unmarried, religious and secular; insomuch that neither rank nor virtue could secure the favourite object from his licentious rapacity[b]. The spirit of the Florentines,

[b] Notwithstanding the dissolute character of Alessandro, it appears that he was possessed of strong natural sagacity, and, on some occasions, administered justice not only with impartiality, but with ability. On this head Ammirato relates an Anecdote which is worth repeating: A rich old citizen of Bergamo had lent to one of his countrymen at Florence 400 crowns, which he advanced without any person being present, and without requiring a written acknowledgment. When the stipulated time had elapsed, the creditor required his money—but the borrower, well apprized that no proof could be brought against him, positively denied that he had ever received it. After many fruitless attempts to recover it, the lender was advised to resort to the duke, who would find some method of doing him justice. Alessandro accordingly ordered both the parties before him, and after hearing the assertions of the one and the positive denial of the other he turned to the creditor, saying, "Is it possible then, friend, that you can have lent your "money when no one was present?"—"There was no "one indeed," replied the creditor; "I counted out "the money to him on a post."—"Go, bring the post "then

rentines though sinking under the yoke of despotism, began to revolt at this more opprobrious species of tyranny, and the absentees and malecontents became daily more numerous and more respectable. But whilst the storm was gathering in a remote quarter, a blow from a kindred hand unexpectedly freed the Florentines from their oppressor, and afforded them once more an opportunity of asserting that liberty to which their ancestors had been so long devoted. Lorenzino de' Medici was the second Brutus who burst the bonds of consanguinity in the expectation of being the deliverer of

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"then this instant," said the duke, "and I will make "it confess the truth." The creditor, though astonished on receiving such an order, hastened to obey, having first received a secret caution from the duke not to be very speedy in his return. In the mean time the duke employed himself in transacting the affairs of his other suitors, till at length turning again towards the borrower, "This man," says he, "stays a long time with his "post."—"It is so heavy, sir," replied the other, "that he could not yet have brought it." Again Alessandro left him, and returning some time afterwards, carelessly exclaimed, "What kind of men are they that "lend their money without evidence?—was there no "one present but the post?"—"No indeed, sir," replied the knave. "The post is a good witness then," said the duke, "and shall make thee pay the man his money."

Ammir. Stor. Fior. lib. xxxi. *v.* iii. *p.* 434.

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of his country. But the principle of political virtue was now extinct, and it was no longer a subject of doubt whether the Florentines should be enslaved; it only remained to be determined who should be the tyrant. On his return from Rome to Florence, Lorenzino had frequented the court of Alessandro, and, by his unwearied assiduity and singular accomplishments, had ingratiated himself with the duke to such a degree, as to become his chief confidant, and the associate of his licentious amours. But whilst Lorenzino accompanied him amidst these scenes of dissipation, he had formed the firm resolution of accomplishing his destruction, and sought only for a favourable opportunity of effecting his purpose. This idea seems to have occupied his whole soul, and influenced all his conduct. Even in the warmth of familiarity which apparently subsisted between them, he could not refrain from adverting to the design of which his mind was full, and by jests and insinuations gave earnest of his intention. Cellini relates, that on his attending the duke Alessandro with his portrait executed as a medal, he found him indisposed and reclined on his bed, with Lorenzino as his companion. After boasting, as was his custom, of the wonders which he could perform in his profession, the artist concluded with expressing his hopes, that

that Lorenzino would favour him with a subject for an apposite reverse. "That is exactly what "I am thinking of," replied Lorenzino, with great vivacity; "I hope ere long to furnish "such a reverse as will be worthy of the duke, "and will astonish the world[c]." The blind confidence of Alessandro prevented his suspicions, and he turned on his bed with a contemptuous smile at the folly or the arrogance of his relation. But whilst Lorenzino thus hazarded the destruction of his enterprise by the levity of his discourse, he prepared for its execution with the most scrupulous caution[d]. The duke having selected as the object of his passion the wife of Leonardo Ginori, then on a publick embassy at Naples, Lorenzino, to whom she was nearly related, undertook with his usual assiduity to promote the suit. Pretending that his representations had been successful, he prevailed upon the duke to pass the night with him at his own house, where he promised him the completion of his wishes. In the mean time he prepared

[c] *Vita di Benvenuto Cellini, p.* 222.

[d] The particulars of this transaction are related at great length by Varchi, who had his information from Lorenzino himself, after the perpetration of the deed. *Storia Fior. lib.* XV.

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prepared a chamber for his reception; and having engaged as his assistant a man of desperate fortunes and character, called Scoroncocolo, waited with impatience for his arrival. At the appointed hour, the duke having left the palace in a mask, according to his custom, when he was engaged in nocturnal adventures, came unobserved to the house of Lorenzino, and was received by him in the fatal chamber. After some familiar conversation, Lorenzino left him to repose on the bed, with promises of a speedy return. On his quitting the chamber, he stationed his coadjutor where he might be in readiness to assist him, in case he should fail in his first attempt, and, gently opening the door, approached the bed, and inquired from the duke if he was asleep, at the same instant passing his sword through his body. On receiving the wound the duke sprang up and attempted to escape at the door; but, on a signal given by Lorenzino, he was attacked there by Scoroncocolo, who wounded him deeply in the face. Lorenzino then grappled with the duke, and throwing him on the bed, endeavoured to prevent his cries. In the struggle the duke seized the finger of Lorenzino in his mouth, and retained it with such violence, that Scoroncocolo, finding it impossible to separate them so as to despatch the duke without danger

danger of wounding Lorenzino, deliberately took a knife from his pocket, and cut him across the throat. The completion of their purpose was however only the commencement of their difficulties. Scoroncocolo, who probably knew not that the person he had assassinated was the duke, until the transaction was over, was so terrified as to be wholly unable to judge for himself of the measures to be adopted for his own safety. To the active mind of Lorenzino various expedients presented themselves; and he hesitated for some time whether he should openly avow the deed, and call upon his countrymen to assert their liberties, or should endeavour to make his escape to the absentees, to whom the information which he had to communicate would give new energy, and a fair opportunity of success. Of these measures the last seemed, on many accounts, to be the most advisable. Having therefore locked the door of the chamber in which he left the dead body of the duke, he proceeded secretly to Bologna, expecting there to meet with Filippo Strozzi, but finding that he had quitted that place, he followed him to Venice, where he related to him his achievements. Filippo, well acquainted with the eccentricity of his character, refused for some time to credit his story, till Lorenzino, producing the key of the chamber, and exhibiting

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ing his hand which had been mutilated in the contest, at length convinced him of its truth. The applause bestowed by Filippo and his adherents on Lorenzino, was in proportion to the incredulity which they had before expressed. He was saluted as another Brutus, as the deliverer of his country; and Filippo immediately began to assemble his adherents, in order to avail himself of so favourable an opportunity of restoring to the citizens of Florence their ancient rights[c].

Motives and consequences of the attempt.

The Italian historians have endeavoured to develop the motives that led Lorenzino to the perpetration of this deed, and have sought for them in the natural malignity of his disposition; as a proof of which he is said to have acknowledged, that during his residence at Rome, notwithstanding the kindness shown to him by Clement VII. he often felt a strong inclination to murder him. They have also attributed them to a desire of immortalizing his name by being considered

[c] On this occasion a medal was struck, bearing on one side the head of Lorenzino, and on the other the cap of liberty between two daggers; being the same device as that which had before been adopted by, or applied to, the younger Brutus. *v. Patin. Famil. Rom. p.* 142. This medal is in the collection of the late earl of Orford.

considered as the deliverer of his country; to a principle of revenge for the insult which he received from the pope, in being banished from Rome, which he meant to repay in the person of Alessandro, his reputed son; and, lastly, to his enmity to the collateral branch of the Medici family, by which he was excluded from the chief dignity of the state. How far any of these conjectures may be well founded, it is not easy to determine. Human conduct is often the result of impulses, which, whilst they arise in various directions, determine the mind towards the same object, and possibly all, or most of the causes before stated, might have concurred in producing so signal an effect. Aware of the misconstruction to which his principles were liable, Lorenzino wrote an apologetical discourse, which has been preserved to the present times, and throws considerable light on this singular transaction. In this piece he first attempts to demonstrate that Alessandro was an execrable tyrant, who, during the six years that he held the chief authority, had exceeded the enormities of Nero, of Caligula, and of Phalaris. He accuses him of having occasioned by poison the death, not only of the cardinal Ippolito, but of his own mother, who resided in an humble station at *Collevecchio*, and whose poverty he conceived was a reproach to the

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the dignity of his rank; and denies that the blood of any branch of the Medici family flowed in his veins. He then justifies, with great plausibility, the conduct adopted by him after the death of the duke, in quitting the city to join the absentees; and after vindicating himself from the imputation of having been induced by any other motive than an earnest desire to liberate his country from a state of intolerable servitude, he concludes with lamenting, that the want of energy and virtue in his fellow-citizens prevented them from availing themselves of the opportunity which he had afforded them of reestablishing their ancient government[f]. But whatever were the motives of this deed, the consequences of it were such as have generally been the result of similar attempts—the riveting of those chains which it was intended to break. The natural abhorrence of treachery, and the sentiment of pity excited for the devoted object, counteract the intended purpose, and throw an odium even on the cause of liberty itself. No end can justify the sacrifice of a principle, nor was a crime ever necessary in the course of human affairs. The sudden burst of vindictive

[f] For the *Apologia* of Lorenzino, *v. App. No.* LXXXIV.

vindictive passion may sometimes occasion important changes in the fate of nations; but the event is seldom within the limits of human calculation. It is only the calm energy of reason, constantly bearing up against the encroachments of power, that can with certainty perpetuate the freedom, or promote the happiness of the human race. CHAP. X.

After the perpetration of this deed, Lorenzino, not conceiving himself in safety within the limits of Italy, continued his route till he arrived at Constantinople, from whence, after a short residence, he returned again to Venice. Having passed eleven years of exile and anxiety, he was himself assassinated by two Florentine soldiers, who, under the pretext of avenging the death of Alessandro, probably sought to ingratiate themselves with his successour, by removing a person who derived from his birth undoubted pretensions to the credit and authority which had for ages been attached to the chief of the house of Medici.

Cosmo de' Medici first grand duke.

The adherents of the ruling family, at the head of whom was the cardinal Cibò, who had been the chief minister of Alessandro, conducted themselves with great prudence on the death

CHAP. X. death of the duke, and before they permitted the event to be made publick, not only secured the soldiery within the city, but summoned to their assistance all their allies in the vicinity of the Florentine state. They then assembled the inhabitants, avowedly to deliberate on the state of the republick, but in fact rather to receive than to dictate a form of government. If Lorenzino was the Brutus of his age, an Octavius was found in his cousin, Cosmo de' Medici, the son of Giovanni, general of the *bande nere*, and then about eighteen years of age. Being informed of the unexpected disposition of the citizens in his favour, Cosmo hastened from his seat at Mugello to Florence, where, on the ninth day of January 1536, he was invested with the sovereignty by the more modest title of chief of the republick. Despotism generally proceeds with cautious steps; and Augustus and Cosmo affected the name of citizen, whilst they governed with absolute authority.

Death of Filippo Strozzi, and final extinction of the republick.

To the election of Cosmo little opposition had been made within the city. The proposition of Pallas Rucellai, to admit the party of the Strozzi to their deliberations, and that of Giovanni Canigiani, to place the supreme command in an illegitimate and infant son of Alessandro,

sandro, had met with few supporters[s]. But the numerous exiles, who by compulsion, or in disgust, had quitted their native country during the government of Alessandro, had already begun to convene together from all parts of Italy, in hopes of effecting their restoration, and of establishing a form of government more consistent with their views. The cardinals Ridolfi and Salviati, both grandsons of Lorenzo the Magnificent, Bartolomeo Valori, and other citizens of high rank, uniting with Filippo Strozzi, raised a considerable body of troops, and approached towards the city; but more powerful parties had already interposed, and the fate of Florence no longer depended on the virtue or the courage of its inhabitants, but on the will of the emperour, or on the precarious aid of the French. Sensible of the advantages which he had already obtained by holding at his devotion the Florentine state, and that such influence

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[s] Besides an illegitimate son named Giulio, Alessandro left two illegitimate daughters, Porcia and Juliet. The son entered into the church, and became grand prior of the order of S. Stefano. Porcia took the veil, and founded the convent of S. Clement at Florence. Juliet married Francesco Cantelmo, son of the duke di Popoli, a Neapolitan nobleman. *Tenh. Mem. Gen. liv.* xxii. *p.* 62.

CHAP. X. influence was inconsistent with a republican government, Charles V. openly approved of the election of Cosmo, and directed his troops, then in Italy, to support his cause. The exiles having possessed themselves of the fortress of *Montemurlo*, in the vicinity of Florence, were unexpectedly attacked there by the Florentine troops under the command of Alessandro Vitelli, in the night of the first of August 1538, and their defeat fixed the destiny of their country. Bartolomeo Valori, with his two sons, and Filippo his nephew, were made prisoners, and conducted to Florence, where he, with one of his sons, and his nephew, was decapitated. Many other of the insurgents experienced a similar fate. The rest were consigned to the dungeons in different parts of Tuscany. Filippo Strozzi, the magnanimous assertor of the liberties of his country, languished upwards of twelve months in the prisons of Castello, and his situation became more hopeless in proportion as the authority of Cosmo became more established. After an interval of time which ought to have obliterated the remembrance of his offence, he was cruelly subjected to torture, under the pretext of discovering the accomplices of his unfortunate enterprise. Finding that the remonstrances of his friends with the emperour and the duke were not only ineffectual, but that the

the latter had resolved to expose his fortitude to a second trial, he called to his mind the example of Cato of Utica, and fell by his own hand, a devoted victim to the cause of freedom[h]. CHAP. X.

Thus terminated the Florentine republick, which had subsisted amidst the agitations of civil commotions, and the shock of external attacks, for upwards of three centuries, and had produced from its circumscribed territory a greater number of eminent men than any other country in Europe. This singular preeminence is chiefly to be attributed to the nature of its government, which called forth the talents of every rank of citizens, and admitted them without distinction to the chief offices of the state. But the splendour which the Florentines derived from examples of publick virtue, and efforts of superlative genius, was frequently tarnished by the sanguinary contests of rival parties. The beneficent genius of Lorenzo de' Medici for a time removed this reproach, and combined a state of high intellectual improvement with the tranquillity of well-ordered government. The various Conclusion.

[h] The life of Filippo Strozzi was written by his brother Lorenzo, with great candour and impartiality, and is published at the close of the Florentine history of Benedetto Varchi. *Ed. Leyd. sine an.* After the death of Filippo, a paper in his own hand-writing was found in his bosom, which is given in the Appendix, *No.* LXXXV.

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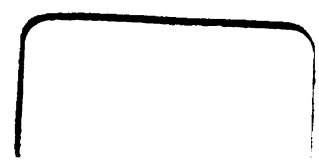
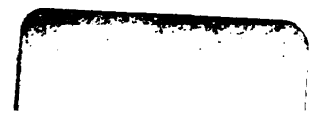
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